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THESIS

**THE MARINE CORPS MILITARY
ACQUISITION WORKFORCE: A CAMPAIGN
PLAN FOR THE FUTURE**

by

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March 1996

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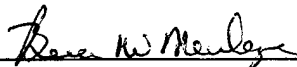
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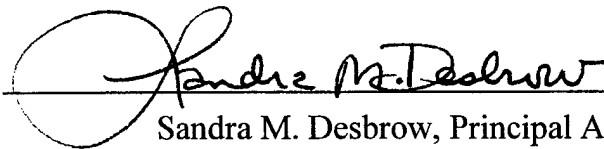
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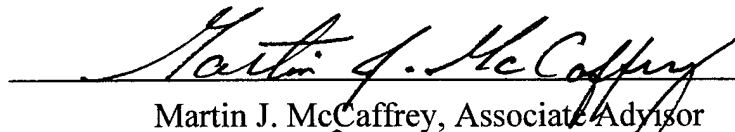


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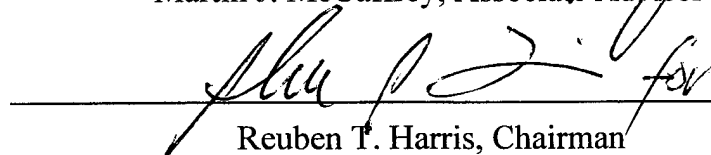
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ABSTRACT

Public Law 101-510, Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) became effective upon its passage for Fiscal Year 1992. The intent of the legislation is to increase the training and professionalism of the Department of Defense Acquisition Workforce. The DAWIA outlines specific requirements and qualifications for various specialties within the General Series (GS) workforce and states requirements for the qualifications of military personnel who are filling acquisition billets.

This thesis will focus on the Marine Officers currently working in the acquisition workforce. It will look at how they are accessed and trained within the workforce. It will also look at current career progression and makes recommendations as to how the current acquisition workforce structure should be modified in order to remain viable well into the next century.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. GENERAL

Clearly within the Department of Defense (DOD), concerted efforts have been made to develop a professionalized cadre of officers whose mission in the broadest sense is to organize, equip, train and direct military forces. While the acquisition of the weapon systems and other equipment and material required by the military in performing this mission is a critical link in the performance of this defense mission, there has been far less emphasis placed on developing a high quality, professionalized acquisition workforce (AWF).

The great majority of efforts to improve the acquisition system over the past 20 years have been focused on changes in acquisition policies, procedures and processes. These have included acquisition techniques such as Total Package Procurement, Design-to-Cost, emphasis on various contract types and the use of multi-year contracting. Major efforts at legislative changes include the Competition In Contracting Act, the Defense Procurement Reform Act of 1984 and the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act, as well as other provisions routinely included in yearly Defense Authorization Acts.

There have been fewer efforts to improve the management and organizational structure of the acquisition system, with even less attention focused on the workforce. The most notable efforts in this area prior to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) were the Packard Commission's recommendations to streamline the acquisition organizational structure in 1986.

Any professional organization requires qualified, trained and properly motivated personnel to achieve the organization's missions and goals. Although good people can get the job done even in the wrong organizational structure, the wrong

people (unqualified, poorly trained and lacking motivation) cannot accomplish the mission even in the best organizational setting. Why then have there been so few reform efforts directed towards improvements in the quality of acquisition personnel?

Lack of reform initiatives however, does not mean that there has been a lack of concern in this area. In the case of the AWF within DOD, it has been recognized for nearly 25 years, both within and outside Government, that the quality and professionalism of this workforce must be improved.

The importance of this issue was best described in the Fitzhugh Commission Blue Ribbon Defense Panel report of July 1, 1970 when it postulated that:

The key determinants of the ultimate effectiveness and efficiency of the defense procurement process are the procurement personnel who have the challenging responsibility for interpreting and applying the regulations...the importance of this truism has not been appropriately reflected in the recruitment, career development, training and management of the procurement workforce. As a consequence, the Department is faced with a significant number of immediate and future problems with respect to the availability in adequate numbers of appropriately qualified and capable procurement personnel. [Ref. 1:p. 94]

Sixteen years later, the Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management, chaired by former Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard, noted that the Defense Department "must be able to attract and retain the caliber of people necessary for a quality acquisition program." [Ref. 2:p. 16] Most recently, former Presidents Carter and Ford advised the Bush administration that:

With experienced, competent civil servants and political appointees Defense Department acquisition can be managed successfully. Without them no organizational policy changes are going to make any substantial difference in DOD management.... The single most likely way to produce further waste in DOD and further procurement scandals

is to discourage public service by the competent, to take no steps to improve the quality of the career civilian managers, and to appoint to important positions in DOD those who have little or no relevant knowledge of, or experience in, defense type acquisition. [Ref. 3:p. 16]

In addition to the Fitzhugh and Packard Commissions, four additional commissions since 1945 have reviewed the acquisition workforce within DOD. The First and Second Hoover Commissions in 1949 and 1955, the Commission on Government Procurement in 1972 and the Grace Commission in 1983. All of the studies observed the necessity to improve the quality and professionalism of DOD acquisition personnel. In addition there have been numerous studies and reports from various other sources, such as the General Accounting Office, the Rand Corporation, internal DOD studies and academia.

In critiquing various aspects of the DOD acquisition process, many of these reports cited the need to improve personnel management of the AWF. For example, J. Ronald Fox, a Harvard business professor, observed in 1974 that:

... the most far-reaching reform would be the establishment of a clearly defined procurement career field within the military, with senior procurement managers controlling assignments and promotions. Anything short of this will not resolve the continuous crisis in procurement management. [Ref. 4:p. 201]

However, writing 18 years later Fox observed that efforts to establish military career programs for program managers (PMs) and procurement personnel had been resisted:

...by senior officers in personnel and combat arms units, who were unconvinced of the need for a highly skilled and stable professional force to manage the acquisition process. Senior combat arms officers (who control military assignments and promotions) were also

concerned that they would loose some of their most able officers to acquisition careers if they lost control of the assignment and promotion process. [Ref. 5:p. 190]

It seems from Fox's point of view that all of the panels, commissions, studies and bodies of legislation prior to 1988 have had little positive effect on the management of the military officers within the DOD AWF.

In 1991, DAWIA was passed by both chambers of Congress and signed into law. It is the most recent attempt at legislating an increase in the training and professionalization of the military and civilians within the DOD AWF. The Marine Corps, as part of DOD, is currently facing a real challenge in accessing, training and developing its military officers in the wake of this highly structured and directive legislation.

B. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this research is to examine the current topical issues that impact and effect the management of the military officers comprising the Marine Corps Acquisition Workforce. It will concentrate specifically on the accession, training and professional development policies currently in use by DOD and Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC). It will attempt to determine what, if any, changes need to be made to insure that the AWF can meet the challenges that it will face in the 21st century.

The ultimate goal of this research is the creation of a plan that includes a validation of the current career pattern for Marine acquisition officers, or suggests a revised career track that will be useful to the Commanding General, Marine Corps Systems Command (COMMARCORSSYSCOM) as she continues to oversee the professional development and DAWIA mandated requirements of Marine acquisition officers.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

The following primary research question will be used to direct and guide the objectives of this study:

How can the Marine Corps Acquisition Workforce best be directed to ensure a sufficient number of Marine officers are accessed, trained and gain the experience necessary to staff the Marine Corps' critical acquisition positions?

This primary research question can be divided into a number of subsidiary research questions to make the investigation more manageable. The following subsidiary questions will be used in this study:

1. What are the legal statutes and regulations that govern the framework of the Marine Corps Acquisition Workforce?
2. How does the Marine Corps currently access officers into the AWF?
3. What are the educational requirements for the AWF and how are the continuing educational requirements being met for acquisition officers?
4. Are there DOD or Marine Corps educational programs that can be utilized to incentivize participation in the AWF?

D. SCOPE, LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The scope of this thesis is restricted to the military officers within the Marine Corps Acquisition Workforce. Although the civilian members of the force are an integral part of the acquisition process, they are not included in this study. Currently, civilian workers fill 43 percent of the 1,295 designated acquisition billets within the Marine Corps [Ref. 6:p. 1]. They are the permanent technical backbone of the force. Unlike military officers, they tend to remain in their positions for many years at a time

and are subject to a much different set of career considerations than military officers. Additionally, being more stable in their billets, they are usually available for assignments to professional education courses throughout their careers, whereas military officers are generally only available for acquisition related professional education while assigned to an acquisition billet. These differing factors would invalidate any conclusions that would be drawn on the Marine Corps Acquisition Workforce as a single population.

Additionally, the study does not include the approximately 100 enlisted members of the workforce [Ref. 7:p. 4]. The majority of the members of the enlisted workforce are assigned the Marine Corps military occupational specialty (MOS) 3044. These Marines are classified as Purchasing and Contracting Specialists and perform various duties incident to the acquisition of supplies and nonpersonal services purchased via open market from commercial and Government sources [Ref. 8:pp. 3-171]. Because this segment of the AWF deals primarily with small purchases, career paths and acquisition related educational requirements although important, are not analogous to that of the officer corps. Their unique requirements have already been the topic of a comprehensive study conducted by Major Roy R. Schleiden, USMC [Ref. 9].

Several assumptions were made in this study. The first is that the Marine Corps is committed to maintaining its own military AWF. A corollary to this assumption is that the Marine Corps will do whatever is reasonably necessary and required by statute to encourage the professionalization of any and all officers volunteering for the workforce. They will do this in order to create a more efficient and responsive procurement system. This assumption does not mean to suggest that the Corps has not made a concerted effort in this area in the past. Quite the contrary, the Marine Corps has demonstrated not only a sincere desire to comply with the letter

and intent of the law, but has continued full-fledged support of the entire acquisition process. The recently appointed Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), General Charles Krulak, reaffirmed the Corps' commitment to acquisition by making it one of the planks in the Commandant's Planning Guidance (CPG) which is his roadmap for the service that states "where the Marine Corps is going and why," and "what the Marine Corps will do," in the four years of his tenancy and beyond [Ref. 10:p. 1].

The second assumption is that the Marine Corps desires to have all officers in the AWF remain fully capable and credible in their primary MOS. A primary MOS is defined as an MOS that is assigned upon initial accession into the Marine Corps and involves duties in combat arms and direct support functions. Participation in the AWF is currently labeled a secondary duty and is identified as such in the MOS system. The Marine Corps strongly believes that Marines assigned to acquisition tours immediately after completing a successful tour in their primary MOS bring with them a wealth of hands on experience along with the knowledge of what the Marines in the field require from their equipment. This is a cornerstone of the Corps' acquisition process because it ensures that the acquisition cycle is responsive to the needs of the Marine Forces [Ref. 11].

The third and final assumption is that any recommended changes to the current accession, training and professional development policies used to shape the AWF involve a bare minimum of increases in Marine officers in the training transient patient and prisoner (T2P2) categories or fiscal requirements. The T2P2 category is used to identify officers that are not currently available for Fleet Marine Force (FMF) assignments because they are attending training schools, a hospital patient, moving between assignments or detained in military confinement. In the fiscal arena, the Marine Corps, being the smallest of the four Armed Services, can least afford to have

a large investment in the numbers of officers devoted to a dedicated training cycle for acquisition related educational requirements.

There were no major limitations that were encountered while conducting this study.

E. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used by the researcher consisted of two basic procedures, the first being a review of the pertinent literature and the second being the use of personal interviews to elicit information on questions produced by the literature review.

The comprehensive review of relevant outstanding literature on this thesis topic consisted of obtaining reports held by the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), Defense Logistics Studies Information Exchange (DLSIE), the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF), the Defense Systems Management College (DSMC) and the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT), as well as applicable professional journals. There was also a large body of information available from numerous documents on this subject internal to the Marine Corps.

Personal interviews were conducted at HQMC and the Marine Corps Systems Command (MARCORSYSCOM) during the period 7-11 August 1995. The Commander of the MARCORSYSCOM (COMMARCORSYSCOM), Major General Carol Mutter, and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Aviation (DC/S AIR), Lieutenant General Harold Blot, both submitted to extensive information gathering sessions that provide great insight into the current state of the Marine Corps Military AWF and their visions for the future. Additionally, the Director of Acquisition Workforce Management for the Marine Corps, Mr. J. L. Crevillo arranged for interview periods with seven program managers (PMs) currently serving in program management (PM) billets within the Marine Corps.

F. THESIS ORGANIZATION

This research effort is comprised of six chapters covering the following subject areas:

Chapter I is an introduction providing the rationale and objectives to be obtained in this study.

Chapter II presents background information on the DAWIA implementation in general and specifically on how its tenants were adopted into the Marine Corps.

Chapter III will give a snapshot of the number of acquisition billets identified by the Marine Corps, the number of officers available to fill them and the interrelationship between the AWF and the Special Education Program (SEP).

Chapter IV will identify a generic officer's career path, look at the impact of imposing acquisition related requirements on the generic career path, and study a previous recommendation at developing a career track for Marine acquisition officers.

Chapter V will analyze the material presented in Chapters III and IV and suggest ways of improving the way Marine officers are accessed and trained in the AWF.

Chapter VI will summarize the findings of the previous chapters and present a Campaign Plan for action.

II. BACKGROUND

A. ACQUISITION REFORM: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

"Frankly, gentlemen, in defense procurement, we have a real mess on our hands."

The Honorable David Packard
Deputy Secretary of Defense, 1970
[Ref. 4:p. 1]

From a historical sense, failings of the weapons acquisition process are not limited to the past 25 years. They are not even confined to the 20th century. In March 1794, Congress authorized the building of six large frigates, which were to form the backbone of the U.S. Navy. Nearly 17 months later, six keels were laid. Shortly thereafter, due to delays and cost overruns, the program was cut back to just three frigates [Ref. 12:p. 18].

More recently DOD has been the subject of numerous scandalous newspaper articles and 30-second news bites revealing astronomical prices that the Government was paying for common hardware items. Clearly, past attempts at acquisition reform have not been totally successful. It has almost become a cliché to state that the numerous reforms initiated over the years have not had the desired effect and today we face the same set of acquisition problems as the founders of the Navy did in 1794.

Attempts at reforming the procurement process have not been unsuccessful because their intent has not been clear or focused. Each attempt at acquisition reform has been specifically aimed at correcting long-standing deficiencies in the acquisition system, including improving the quality of the AWF.

1. Early Attempts at AWF Improvement

Some of the earliest recommendations for changes in the AWF in the 20th century can be traced to the First and Second Hoover Commissions of 1949 and 1955 respectively.

The First Hoover Commission was created by a unanimous vote of Congress in July 1947. The Commission was bipartisan with six members from each party. Four Commissioners each were chosen by the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and President Truman.

The Commission was tasked with a general review of the functioning of the Executive Branch of Government and attempted to identify "duplication, overlapping and administrative turmoil" within that branch of Government [Ref. 13:p: vi]. This was an enormous undertaking. The Commission divided its work into functional and departmental segments. It created 24 separate task forces with broad authority to engage in as much research as they might require. In general the Commission found that the United States was paying a heavy price for a lack of order, a lack of clear lines of authority and responsibility and a general lack of organization in the executive branch. It found that great improvements could be made in the effectiveness with which the Government can serve the people if its organization and administration are overhauled.

The Commission specifically addressed the deficiencies in supply administration and in the personnel assigned to the AWF, or "supply positions" as they were called in that era. The Commissioners stated that a:

Failure is reflected further in the personnel system which does not provide competent staff to fill supply positions. Although purchasing is a highly skilled profession that requires intimate knowledge of the conditions...personnel processes fail to make proper acknowledgment of the skills required. [Ref. 13:p. 96]

Additionally they found that the Federal Government needs to develop a:

Career service which attracts and holds men and women of the highest intelligence and whose devotion to duty and whose competence is commensurate with the needs of our Government. Any personnel practices which do not attain this objective must be condemned. In their place we must substitute methods which will achieve such an objective. Unless this goal is attained we cannot expect sound, efficient, and economical Government. [Ref. 13:p. 110]

The Second Hoover Commission went into much greater detail on military procurement issues. The commission devoted an entire task force to this subject. In their final report, the Commissioners concluded that there was a wealth of talent and ability in the military departments that was only being partially used in the procurement arena for four primary reasons. The stated reasons were:

1. Requiring those who achieve top military rank to become well rounded in all military fields, with predominant emphasis on combat command skills;
2. Rotating key logistics personnel from assignments prior to the arrival and indoctrination of qualified replacements;
3. Assigning senior officers with limited logistics training to key logistics positions; and
4. Depriving civilians of access to many key logistics positions of predominately business management character, on the grounds that such positions must be reserved for the training of military executives or that backgrounds in military operations is a prerequisite. [Ref. 14:p. 68]

The Commission felt so strongly on this matter that in their final report to President Eisenhower they made an official recommendation that:

The Secretary of Defense should establish a policy requiring each military department to develop and assign career-trained personnel to technical and executive posts throughout the field of procurement management. [Ref. 14:p. 68]

The Commission felt that the need for this management policy should be apparent and wondered why DOD was not already pursuing a similar policy on their own. They noted that at many of the largest logistical installations, it was not unusual to find that the officer in charge and his key assistants came to their assignments without adequate experience in the function in which they were to manage. They recommended to President Eisenhower that the implementation to the proposed policy should include the following three steps.

1. Departmental school programs should be designed to assure the phased training of all career procurement employees not adequately qualified [Ref. 14:p. 68].
2. The positions of material manager, commanding officer of a logistical headquarters or installation and all technical or supervisory positions at any nontactical headquarters or installation should be filled only with qualified career-trained personnel. In this connection it is recognized that there is a necessary and proper place for combat officers in logistical activities and for logistical officers in combat activities as staff assistants and advisors. Combat officers who are transferred to support activities should, of course, be required to qualify for technical and executive posts through proper training and experience [Ref. 14:p. 68].
3. Qualified civilians should be given the logistical training made available to military personnel, and an opportunity to advance into all responsible positions except those where the requirement for military command is essential. [Ref. 14:p. 68]

The Hoover Commission Reports are only the tip of the proverbial iceberg when it comes to recommendations on changes for the procurement system in general

and specifically the AWF. In each of the decades since the 1940's there has been some sort of study or major commission report that addressed these issues. Figure 2.1 provides a consolidated timeline of these studies.

The next report that had a considerable impact on procurement practices was the Blue Ribbon Defense Panel of 1970.

2. The Blue Ribbon Defense Panel

The Blue Ribbon Defense Panel was appointed by President Nixon in July 1969. It consisted of prominent members of the educational and business communities and contained no elected Government officials. It was chaired by Gilbert W. Fitzhugh who at the time was also the Chairman of the Board for Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. The Commission subsequently became known as the Fitzhugh Commission.

Fitzhugh's charter was much the same as the Hoover Commission's 20 years prior. His panel was charged with studying the organization and management of DOD. This time however the scope was to specifically include "the Defense procurement policies and practices, particularly as they relate to costs, time and quality" [Ref. 1:p. v].

The panel interviewed many witnesses in depth and conducted a survey of DOD organizations in the Washington area. It also sent a questionnaire to a large number of people outside DOD who they felt were knowledgeable in the subject area. They also reviewed earlier reports of studies on the DOD.

1950	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995
▲ First Hoover Commission (1949)								
▲ Second Hoover Commission (1955)								
▲ McNamara Initiatives (1961)								
▲ Fitzhugh Commission (1970)								
▲ Commission on Government Procurement (1972)								
▲ Office of Management and Budget Circular A-109 (1976)								
▲ Defense Science Board Acquisition Cycle Study (1978)								
▲ Defense Resource Management Study (1979)								
▲ Defense Acquisition Improvement Program (1981)								
▲ Grace Commission (1983)								
▲ Packard Commission (1986)								
▲ Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act (1986)								
▲ Defense Management Review (1989)								
▲ HASC Report on Quality and Professionalism of the AWF (1990)								
▲ The Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (1991)								

Source: [Ref. 15]

Figure 2.1. Key Acquisition Studies and Reform Initiatives

Not surprisingly, they found many of the same deficiencies that the Hoover Commissions had identified two decades earlier. They found that:

The promotion and rotation systems of the Military Services do not facilitate career development in the technical and professional activities, such as research and development, procurement, intelligence, communications and automatic data processing [Ref. 1:p. 2].

Additionally, they found that:

Program Management assignments have not generally been recognized as having good potential for career development for military officers. Program management is not effectively a career service for military officers, although military officers act as Program Managers on a majority of developments, and are almost always designated as Program Managers for major systems. These officers have traditionally been rotated on normal tours of duty (2-4 years) among a variety of types of jobs. Although they usually bring to the Program Manager assignment knowledge of the operational use of the type of system involved in the development, they often have a minimum of training and experience in business management; yet they are faced with the task of negotiating with and monitoring the efforts of industrial organizations which bring to the problem talented, technical and management personnel with extensive continuity and experience in the particular type of activity encompassed in the development. In addition, Program Managers have been often rotated, based on time in their careers, at critical points in the development of the programs and frequently with no overlap for training their successor. [Ref. 1:p. 79]

They also severely criticized DOD for showing:

No indication of consistent efforts by the Services to select Program Managers from among those officers who have the most promising potential. Ideally, a Program Manager should possess both managerial and technical skills and experience in the operational employment of

the type of system, weapon or other hardware under development.
[Ref. 1:p. 80]

Based on these findings the Fitzhugh Commission recommended to President Nixon in its final report that DOD:

Establish a career specialty code for Program Managers in each Military Service and develop selection and training criteria that will ensure the availability of an adequate number of qualified officers. The criteria should emphasize achieving a reasonable balance between the needs for knowledge of operational requirements and experience in management [Ref. 1:p. 8].

It appears from these reports that despite a conscientious effort by many different distinguished sources and Presidential administrations that very little substantive change has occurred within the AWF since the First Hoover Commission Report in 1949. This pattern of inaction would change for the better in the 1980's.

3. The 1980's: A Prelude to DAWIA

In July 1985, Ronald Reagan tasked his own Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management, more commonly known as the Packard Commission, to:

Study the issues surrounding defense management policies and procedures, including the budget process, the procurement system, legislative oversight, and the organizational and operational arrangements, both formal and informal, among the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Unified and Specified Command system, the Military Departments, and the Congress. [Ref. 2:p. 27]

The Commission was not specifically tasked with studying the AWF. However, it identified numerous deficiencies in the procurement system that

prevented the AWF from accomplishing its mission. Some of these deficiencies were diagnosed as being subject to inflexible acquisition procedures, regulations and laws, lacking individual authority to control programs and being subject to never-ending bureaucratic obligations for making reports [Ref. 16:pp. 13-14]. Rather than faulting the personnel involved in the acquisition process, the Commission took issue with the process that the workforce members had to work within. The Commission even took issue with the Congress when it said:

Chances for meaningful improvement will come not from more regulation but only with major institutional change. Common sense must be made to prevail alike in the enactments of Congress and the operations of the Department. We must give acquisition personnel more authority to do their jobs. If we make it possible for people to do the right thing the first time and allow them to use their common sense, then we believe that the Department can get by with far fewer people. [Ref. 16:p. 13]

Based on their study the Commission recommended to the President that he establish unambiguous authority for overall acquisition policy and clear accountability for acquisition execution along with the "establishment of business-related education and experience criteria...which will provide a basis for the professionalism of their career paths" [Ref. 16:p. 16].

In his address to Congress on April 24, 1986, President Reagan made it absolutely clear that the time for change was at hand and that the powers to make that change lie within his office and the Congress of the United States when he said:

The Packard Commission has charted a three-part course for improving our nation's defense establishment. I have already directed implementation of its recommendations where that can be accomplished through Executive action. In this message, I ask that the Congress enact certain

changes in law that will further improve the organization and operation of the Department of Defense. Now, the remaining requirement for reform lies within the Congress itself. [Ref. 2:p. 49]

The stage was now set for Congress to take proper actions to ensure that the deficiencies in the AWF that had been pointed out over the previous 40 years were rectified, but before they took legislative action they decided to conduct a review of their own.

The Congress tasked the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) to conduct its own study of the AWF. The purpose of the report can be summarized in the following excerpt from the final report.

It is clear...that there is no lack of statutory, executive order and outside expert identification of problems and recommended changes that should be pursued to improve the quality and professionalism of the AWF. Yet despite these continued calls for improvement and the obvious changes made in the recent past, few are convinced that enough has been done. New and varied proposals to change the organization or character of the acquisition workforce have been espoused with increasing efficiency.

Before considering the adoption of any of these proposals, the Committee on Armed Services believed that it was crucial to conduct an in-depth analysis of the state of the AWF and any trends that may be evident. Without such an assessment it is virtually impossible to determine cause and effect -- hence to determine with any certainty that proposed solutions to this problem will bring about the desired result.

Thus, the objective of this report is to assess the qualifications and professionalism of the acquisition workforce -- both present and past, military and civilian; to review the efforts of the Department of Defense and the Military Departments to establish and manage the career development of that workforce; and, where appropriate, provide

recommendations for improving the quality and professionalism of that workforce. [Ref. 17:p. 65]

This was truly an in-depth study of the AWF and left no stone unturned. It was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. It looked at the levels of education, length of employment, experience levels and the training received by the members of this group. It concluded that the basic postulates of the previous studies and commissions were indeed correct and that major changes would be beneficial to the efficiency and morale of the workforce.

Equipped with their own conclusive study that showed that change was long overdue, the recommendations of the Packard Commission and the body of knowledge on this subject that had accumulated over the past 40 years, Congress enacted the first concise body of legislation designed to enhance the professionalization of the AWF.

B. THE DEFENSE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE IMPROVEMENT ACT

On November 5, 1990, Congress passed Public Law 101-510 that since enactment has become commonly known as the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA). Its enactment has had far reaching effects on the members of the AWF.

1. Creating the Acquisition Corps

DAWIA directed the Secretary of Defense to create a formal Acquisition Corps. The legislation allows each of the Military Departments to form its own acquisition corps and makes a specific allowance for the Marine Corps to do the same. It charges the Secretary of Defense with ensuring to the maximum extent practicable, that the policies and procedures provided in DAWIA are implemented in a uniform manner within DOD.

Initially each Service was tasked with identifying the billets they deemed to be acquisition positions. In order to be classified as an acquisition position, the personnel assigned to these billets should be materially involved in the planning, design, development, testing, contracting, production, introduction, acquisition logistics support and disposal of systems, equipment, facilities, supplies or services that are intended for use in or the support of military missions.

Once these positions were identified they were categorized into one of the areas listed below based on the type of work that was predominately performed in that billet. The acquisition position categories (POSCAT) used were:

Program Management

Systems Planning, Research, Development, Engineering and Testing

Contracting

Industrial Property Management

Logistics

Quality Assurance

Manufacturing and Production

Business, Cost Estimating, Financial Management and Auditing

Education, Training and Career Development

Construction

Joint Development

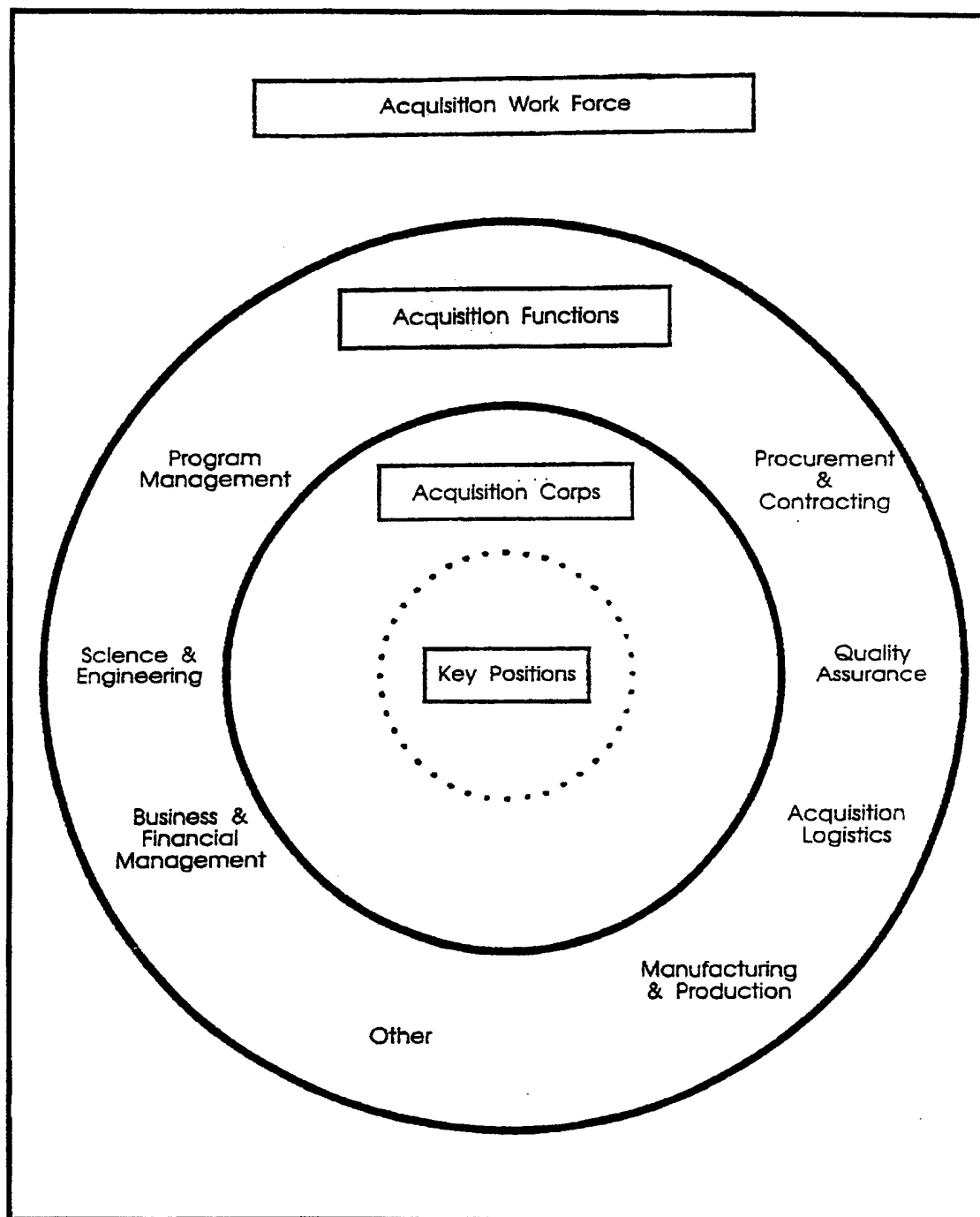
[Ref. 18:p. 210]

After categorizing all of the positions in the AWF, each position category was divided into three career levels for purposes of establishing standards and qualifications: basic, also known as developmental acquisition positions (Level I, officer grade O-1 thru O-3); intermediate (Level II, O-4); and senior (Level III, O-5 and above). Levels II and above were then designated the Acquisition Corps as the personnel assigned to these billets are the trained professional nucleus of the AWF.

Additionally, the Level III billets were designated as being the Critical Acquisition Positions within the Acquisition Corps. They were deemed critical by virtue of their importance to the acquisition process. DAWIA mandates that all positions held by Lieutenant Colonels (O-5) and above be so designated. Additionally, certain positions such as PMs and deputy PMs, of all major defense acquisition programs and any other acquisition positions of significant responsibility, in which primary duties are supervisory or management would be designated as critical if held by a major or O-4. The Services are required annually to publish a list of those positions it designates as critical billets. The primary reason for the critical designation is to preclude individuals without the appropriate experience from being placed into positions for which they are not adequately prepared.

At this point it is important to note that the terms acquisition workforce and acquisition corps are not synonymous. The AWF in general is the personnel component of the acquisition system. The AWF includes personnel who are currently members of the acquisition corps or who are in developmental acquisition positions. The acquisition corps excludes the developmental acquisition positions. This relationship is portrayed in Figure 2.2.

DAWIA attempts to place the required emphasis on the training and experience necessary for the individuals selected to serve in the acquisition corps to succeed in their assigned POSCATs. The key method used to insure that this happens



Source: [Ref. 19]

Figure 2.2. Acquisition Personnel Model

is the building block approach. As military officers grow through promotion within their acquisition career, they are held to an increasingly higher standard at each level. The goal of DAWIA is to increase continuously military officers' professionalism at each step of their careers. The hope is that through initial training in acquisition a "tool box" will be built when an officer enters the workforce. The tool box will continue to build with time, training and education. Ultimately, the instruments will become more precise and so will the officer's ability to affect the acquisition process. Thus a professional corps will continue to be nurtured, and a select few will be prepared to fill the top positions within the acquisition corps.

2. Professionalizing the Acquisition Corps

DAWIA mandated that the Acquisition Corps increase its level of professionalism. It did this by setting minimum standards in three areas. The first area set minimum education and training requirements.

In order for a military officer to qualify as a member of the acquisition corps, the officer must volunteer and be selected by the individual Service's Acquisition Career Program Board which is tasked with managing the accession, training, education and career development of personnel in the AWF.

The legislation provides specific selection criteria to be used by the board. To qualify, the officer is required to have completed at least 24 semester credit hours in business, finance, qualitative methods or management related subjects; have at least four years of experience in an acquisition position; and, as a minimum, have attained the level of Major (O-4) as a military officer. Additionally, each POSCAT has its own unique set of minimum training requirements that must be met at each of the levels within the POSCAT.

The legislation does have provisions for waiver authority for standards established for acquisition corps members. The DAWIA requirements do not apply

to any officers with over ten years of acquisition experience, nor do they apply to someone currently in acquisition with less than ten years experience, if the officer has passed an exam considered by the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology (USD(A&T)) to demonstrate skills, knowledge or abilities comparable to those of an individual who has completed at least 24 semester hours of business, finance, qualitative methods or management related courses.

The second area mandates minimum military grade requirements. This is apparent by the way career levels were tied to military rank. It recognizes the fact that as military officers rise in rank their capabilities to accept greater responsibilities increase. It also capitalizes on the officer's time in Service. Having more time in Service when assigned to the acquisition corps or even a critical acquisition billet means that officers would have had enough time to build on experiences in the field and bring those experiences back to the project they are leading.

The third area provides for professionalization through experience requirements. DAWIA in general sets four years of experience in an acquisition position as the minimum necessary within DOD. It emphasizes the tool box approach in that it requires increasing amounts of experience as the individual progresses through the levels of the acquisition corps so that by the time an officer progresses to the senior positions of PM and Program Executive Officer (general officer) officers have at least eight and ten years of experience respectively. This helps to ensure that only qualified and experienced individuals obtain these lofty positions.

This has been a simplified treatment of the concepts and issues surrounding the DAWIA statute. A more detailed explanation has been omitted purposely because further specifics are not germane to the discussion or have no direct bearing on the implementation of the DAWIA requirements within the Marine Corps. The

next chapter will discuss how the DAWIA requirements specifically relate to the Marine Corps and how the requirements of the statute have been implemented.

III. ANALYSIS OF DAWIA'S IMPACT ON THE MARINE CORPS

A. ACCESSION POLICY ANALYSIS

The current accession policy and procedures used by the Marine Corps when selecting its acquisition officers has been developed using the broad DAWIA standards outlined in the previous chapter as a point of reference from which to start. These wide guidelines have been brought into clearer focus through implementation of DOD Instruction 5000.52-M (DOD 5000.52-M) [Ref. 20] and further refined by Secretary of the Navy Instruction 5300.36 (SECNAVINST 5300.36) [Ref. 21]. The SECNAVINST is the source document that the Navy and Marine Corps utilize in the day to day management of the AWF.

1. The Acquisition Candidate

The Marines have chosen to identify the members associated with the acquisition community by assigning them one of three secondary MOSs [Ref. 21:p. 2-IV-6]. The first secondary MOS assigned is 9957 or Acquisition Candidate. This MOS is assigned to individuals who have taken steps towards becoming an acquisition professional and may or may not meet the qualification standards required for AWF membership. If qualified for AWF membership, they lack the more stringent requirements necessary to become members of the acquisition core or Acquisition Professional Community (APC) as it is called within the Department of the Navy (DON). Although designation as an Acquisition Candidate can be viewed as an entry level qualification, it is not analogous to being Level I certified in a POSCAT. This same logic holds for the 9958, Acquisition Management Officer and 9959, Acquisition Manager MOSs and great care should be taken not to associate the secondary MOSs with career levels. This area causes a great deal of confusion among prospective members of the AWF. Table 3.1 illustrates this point by comparing the

requirements to become an Acquisition Candidate to the DAWIA requirements to become Level I certified in Program Management.

MOS 9957 Requirements	Program Management Career Level I Requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (M) Restricted or Unrestricted Officer - (M) Two Years Acquisition Experience <p>- (M) = Mandatory Requirement (D) = Desired but not Mandatory Requirement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (M) Restricted or Unrestricted Officer - (M) One Year Acquisition Experience - (M) A Basic Course in Systems Acquisition (ACQ 101) - (D) Baccalaureate Degree in Business or Technical Discipline - (D) An Intermediate Course in Systems Acquisition (ACQ 201) - (D) One Additional Basic Course in Another POSCAT

Source: Developed by Researcher

Table 3.1. MOS 9957 Versus Program Management Career Level I Requirements

From this table it is easy to see that confusion between the two qualifications is not unwarranted. While officers who meet all of the mandatory Career Level I requirements are qualified to be members of the AWF, officers with only the requirements to become a 9957 do not meet the requirements for AWF membership because they lack the required Defense Acquisition University courses to meet the minimum training requirements. Conversely, it is entirely possible for an officer to be fully Career Level I certified but not be eligible for the 9957 designation because of the lack of an additional year of acquisition experience.

2. The Acquisition Management Officer

The next secondary MOS that can be assigned is 9958 or Acquisition Management Officer. These are the first level of officers eligible for entry into the APC. These officers are at a minimum Career Level II certified. This designation is given to both Majors and Lieutenant Colonels that meet Career Level II and III certification standards and the four-year experience requirement for APC membership. The confusion factor associated with this MOS is not as great as that with the 9957 MOS but care still must be taken when trying to equate the MOS with career levels. Table 3.2 illustrates why this can be a problem.

The table shows that while there is a four-year experience requirement for APC membership as a 9958 there is only a two-year experience requirement to become Level II certified in Program Management as well as all other POSCATS. It is therefore possible to be Level II certified and not be eligible for designation as a 9958 or acceptance into the APC.

There is another anomaly that becomes readily apparent from viewing Table 3.2. That is in the area of educational requirements. There is currently no mandatory requirement to have attained a Baccalaureate Degree in Program Management or many of the other POSCATS in order to become Level II or III certified. A Baccalaureate Degree is a requirement for accession into the APC and designation as a 9958. This is not necessarily a problem for unrestricted officers, the vast majority are accessed into the Marine Corps already possessing this requirement. This could pose a problem for restricted officers who for the most part are drawn into the officer corps from the warrant officer ranks where attaining a degree is not a hard requirement.

3. The Acquisition Manager

The final MOS that can be assigned to acquisition officers is 9959, which carries the title Acquisition Manager.

MOS 9958 Requirements	Program Management Career Level II Requirements
	LEVEL II
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (M) Restricted or Unrestricted Major or Higher - (M) At Least Four Years Acquisition Experience - (M) Completion of a Baccalaureate Degree and Acquisition Related Educational Requirements in Note 1 - (M) Completion of Career Level II or Higher Acquisition Training Specified by Career Field - (M) Possess a Superior Performance Record 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (M) Restricted or Unrestricted Major or Higher - (M) At Least Two Years Acquisition Experience - (M) An Intermediate Course in Systems Acquisition (ACQ 201) - (D) Two Additional Years Acquisition Experience - (D) Baccalaureate/Masters Degree in Engineering, Systems Management or Other Related Field - (D) One DAU Level 200 Course in Another POSCAT
	ADDITIONAL LEVEL III REQUIREMENTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (M) Four Years of Acquisition Experience - (M) Advanced Program Management Course (PMT 302) - (D) Additional Two Years Acquisition Experience

Source: Developed by Researcher

Note 1: In addition to the degree requirement, the prospective 9958 must have at least 24 Semester hours of credit in business disciplines.

Table 3.2 MOS 9958 Versus Program Management Career Levels II & III Requirements

This MOS exists only for the career field of Program Management [Ref. 22:p. 2]. The MOS is used to identify Colonels and Colonel selects that meet all requirements for APC membership and all Level III requirements listed in Table 3.2. In addition to meeting those stringent requirements the Colonels must have six years of acquisition experience. It is desired that the Acquisition Managers have two additional years of experience and have completed the Advanced Program Management Course (PMT 302) or its functional equivalent at the Defense Systems Management College. These are the senior officers destined to become the Marine Corps' Acquisition Category I and II (ACAT) Program Managers [Ref. 22:p. 3].

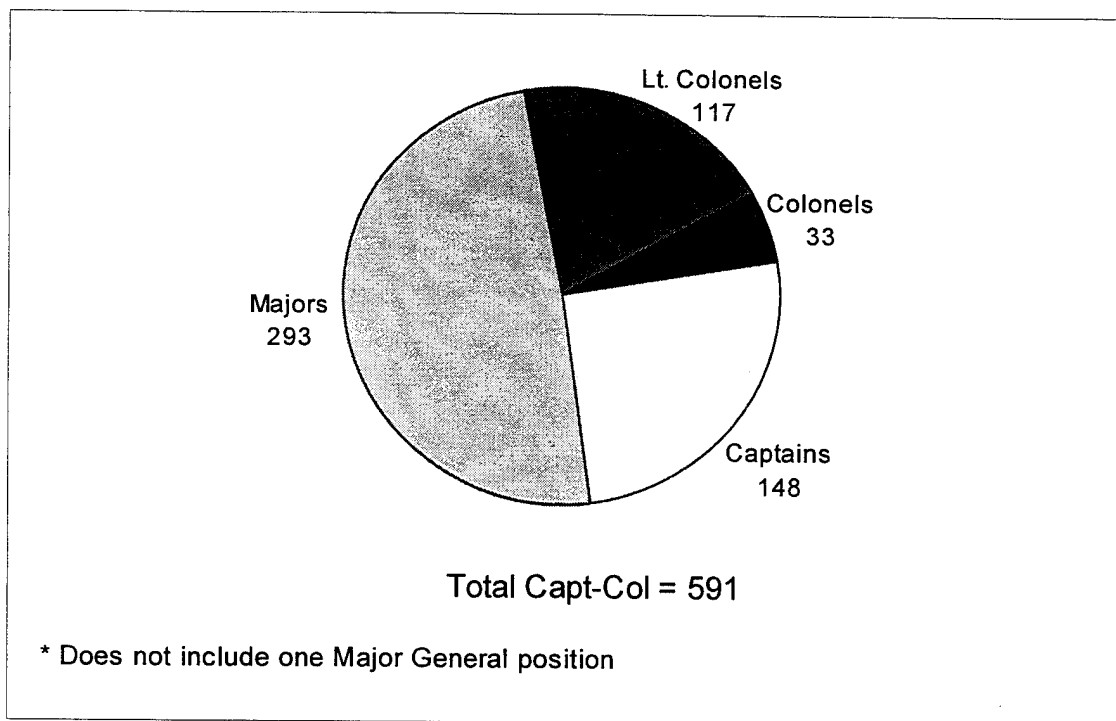
4. The Selection Process

The actual selection process for designation to these MOSs occurs by a formal board held yearly at HQMC. An All Marine Message (ALMAR) solicits applications normally during March of each year with the actual selection process occurring in July. Any restricted or unrestricted officer may apply and be selected for the 9957 or 9958 in one or more career fields. Since the 9959 MOS exists in only the Program Management career field, it would seem at first hand that only Program Management designated officers would be eligible to become the senior leadership and managers of ACAT I and II programs within the Marine Corps. However, this is not the case. The Marine Corps allows Colonels with a background in any of the career fields to apply and be selected as an Acquisition Manager if deemed qualified during the selection process [Ref. 22:p. 2]. Officers that are not qualified for the 9959 MOS are assigned the 9957 or 9958 MOS commensurate with their level of qualification.

This selection process has occurred annually since 1991. The next section of this chapter will look at what level of success the Marine Corps has achieved since the first selection board in identifying and staffing their acquisition positions.

B. ANALYSIS OF ACQUISITION BILLET IDENTIFICATION AND OFFICER ACCESSIONS

DAWIA mandates that all of the Military Departments identify and report both their acquisition positions and critical acquisition positions (CAPs) on a yearly basis. Since 1991 the Marine Corps has identified a total of 592 billets involving acquisition duties that are required to be filled from the commissioned officer ranks in the grade of Captain through Brigadier General. Of these billets, 151 at the Lieutenant Colonel level or above are designated as CAPs for the Marine Corps [Ref. 21:p. 9]. The billets are broken down by rank in Figure 3.1 below.



Source: [Ref. 6]

Figure 3.1. USMC Military Acquisition Positions

Figure 3.1 is useful in helping gauge the overall size and rank distribution of the Marine Corps officer acquisition billets but it does not convey any information as to how the billets are distributed among the different acquisition career fields. Figure 3.2 provides these data.

POSCAT	Captain	Major	Lt. Col	Colonel	TOTAL
BFM	2	3	2	0	7
COMM	8	11	0	0	19
CONT	8	14	0	0	22
ET&CD	0	0	2	0	2
LOG	10	15	10	1	36
M&P	5	1	4	1	11
PM	65	177	84	30	356
PMO	0	0	0	1	1
QA	1	2	1	0	4
SPRDE	34	39	6	0	79
T&E	15	31	8	0	54
TOTAL	148	293	117	33	591

Source: [Ref. 6]

*Does not include one Major General in PM

Figure 3.2. Marine Corps Military Acquisition Positions by Rank and Career Field

The Marine Corps began formally accessing officers to fill these billet requirements in 1991. Since that time the Marine Corps has formally certified and

Source: [Ref. 23]

accessed 575 officers into the AWF [Ref. 23:p. 5]. The results of these efforts can be observed pictorially in Figure 3.3.

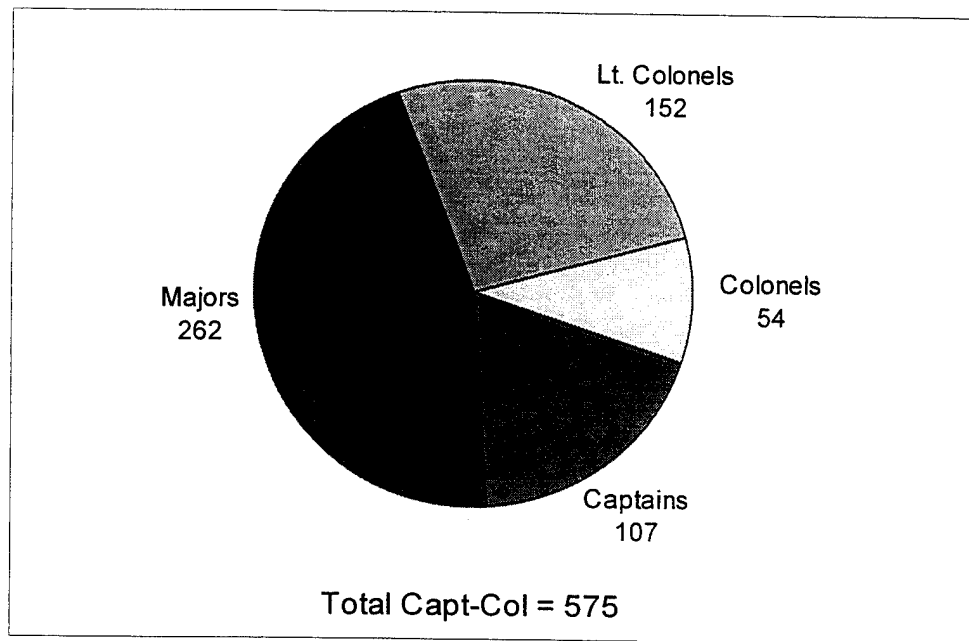


Figure 3.3. USMC Military AWF Membership

At first glance it would seem that the Corps has succeeded in filling nearly all of their identified positions. A comparison of Figures 3.2 and 3.3 shows that the Marine Corps has accessed 575 officers to fill 591 billets and for the most part this accession has been at the appropriate grade levels. These graphs can be misleading. This would be an appropriate statement if all Marines in the AWF were currently serving in acquisition billets. This is not the case however.

The Marine Corps believes that there is a great deal to be gained by alternating its unrestricted officers between billets in their primary military occupational specialty (MOS) and acquisition billets. They believe that an acquisition officer with recent FMF experience brings to the acquisition billet:

- A current expert knowledge of the equipment and doctrine used in his MOS;
- A first hand field experience to assist with identifying testing requirements;
- An understanding for interoperability requirements and how systems interface;
- FMF leadership skills to be used for leading teams of civilian and military personnel.
[Ref. 11]

In general these officers bring current knowledge of Fleet Marine Force (FMF) needs with them to the acquisition cycle. The Marine Corps also feels that these officers have a unique feel for the Marines in the field that translates into a sense of urgency as they fill positions of responsibility and exert influence in the acquisition community. [Ref. 11]

The Marine Corps also feels strongly that Marines returning to the FMF after an acquisition tour take with them some desirable elements such as:

- Being better in tune with emerging warfighting doctrine and the new weapons and employment techniques that will be utilized in employing the new doctrine;
- A greater in-depth knowledge of the system engineering than that of an end user of the weapon system;
- Being able to incorporate management skills gleaned from the acquisition experience into their FMF duties;
- Valuable experience in the joint arena from involvement in joint programs;

- And valuable preparation for senior FMF leadership and command positions that may use systems fielded during the officer's acquisition assignments.

It is clear that there are definite advantages to the policy of alternating between acquisition assignments and FMF duties. However, the policy of alternating between FMF assignments and acquisition assignments means that at best, in order to maintain proper rotation, approximately half of the Marines accessed into the AWF will actually be serving in an acquisition designated billet at any one time.

There is another factor that further decreases the number of acquisition designated Marines that fill acquisition positions. A significant number of Marines are in the training, transient, patient and prisoner (T2P2) categories at any given time during the year. The largest portion of these T2P2 officers are those currently attending Service level schooling (such as Amphibious Warfare School at the company grade level or the Marine Corps Command and General Staff College at the field grade level). These annual but necessary drains in the pool of officers qualified and certified to fill AWF positions requires that the ratio of unrestricted officers voluntarily accessed into the AWF to the number of designated acquisition positions should be maintained at a 2.5 to 3 to one ratio. This suggests that current officer strength of the AWF should be in the 1500 - 1800 range under ideal circumstances.

There are two anomalies that become apparent upon deeper inspection of the numbers associated with Figures 3.1 through 3.3. The first area of concern deals with the physical structure of the acquisition positions. From a manpower standpoint, in order to properly staff any MOS it is necessary to have it structured in a classical pyramid shape. This recognizes the need for fewer officers as they move through their careers and become more senior in rank. However, in the case of the AWF, the present structure is the opposite of this. As a result, presently there are only billets for

approximately half the number of captains as for majors. This presents a problem in that there is a lack of opportunity for captains to gain the acquisition experience that is required to enter the APC as a major. This problem can be reduced to a certain extent if the Marine Corps is able to continue accessing enough majors that, through their own efforts, have acquired the prerequisite experience required for the AWF. But if the pool of qualified applicants begins to dwindle it will be impossible to grow enough qualified majors from the eligible pool of captains to fill the number of billets in the AWF.

A second area of interest is the distribution of the acquisition positions among the differing career fields. Figure 3.2 shows that the PM career field is by far the largest of the career fields within the Marine Corps. It is so large in fact that 60 percent of the military acquisition billets require an officer with program management qualifications. It is even more important to note that 115 of the 151, or 76 percent of the CAPs within the Marine Corps military AWF, require program management experienced officers [Ref. 23:p. 9]. This suggests that the success or failure for the Marine Corps AWF hinges on the proper accession and training of highly motivated officers to fill these PM positions.

The next section of this chapter will go into detail on the requirements that must be met in order to grow PMs qualified to oversee the Marine Corps acquisition programs.

C. ANALYSIS OF PROGRAM MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The legislation that enacted DAWIA also provided a mechanism for those affected by the law to receive the prerequisite training in their position categories. DAWIA created the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) system to do this. This system is a consortium of DOD education and training institutions which provides mandatory and assignment specific acquisition courses for personnel serving in the

11 acquisition career fields. DAU coordinates the DOD acquisition education and training program to meet the training requirements of more than 114,000 military and civilians serving in DOD acquisition positions. Through its consortium members, DAU provides basic, intermediate, advanced and qualification courses to support the professional development of persons in the acquisition workforce. DAU works to identify competencies required to perform at various career levels. DAU then recommends mandatory training, education and experience requirements in each of the functional areas to the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Technology) (USD (A&T)). These requirements are published annually along with course descriptions in the DAU Course Catalog [Ref. 24]. Members of the acquisition workforce who have accumulated a total of ten years of acquisition experience prior to 1 October 1991 were "grandfathered" and are not required to meet these DAWIA requirements. The current PM requirements in education, experience and training by career level are:

Level I (Captain)

Education:

(Desired) Baccalaureate Degree preferably with a major in engineering, systems management or business administration

Experience:

One year of program management experience

Training:

ACQ 101 Fundamentals of Systems Acquisition Management (9 class days)

(Desired) ACQ 201 Intermediate Systems Acquisition (20 class days)

(Desired) One other additional DAU basic level course in another acquisition career field.

Level II (Major)

Education: (Desired)

Master's Degree preferably with a major in engineering, systems management, business administration, or a related field

Experience:

Two years of acquisition experience, at least one year of which must be in program management.

(Desired) An additional two years of acquisition experience, preferably in a systems program office or similar organization.

Training:

ACQ 201 Intermediate Systems Acquisition (20 class days)

(Desired) One DAU intermediate level course in another acquisition career field.

(Desired) Intermediate level management and leadership training.

Level III (Lt. Col. and above)

Education:

Have **ONE** of:

At least 24 semester credit hours from among: accounting, business finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, organization and management.

At least 24 semester credit hours in the individual's career field and 12 semester credit hours in the disciplines listed above.

Pass Defense Activity for Nontraditional Education Support (DANTES) or College Level Examination Program (CLEP) equivalency exams for above.

At least 10 years acquisition experience (as of 1 Oct. 91).

(Desired) Master's Degree in engineering, systems acquisition management, business administration, or related field.

Experience:

Four years of acquisition experience, of which at least two years must have been in a systems program office.

(Desired) Two additional years of acquisition experience.

Training:

Complete **ONE** of:

PMT 301 Program Management Course (97 class days, no longer offered)

PMT 302 Advanced Program Management (67 class days)

NOTE: All of the DAWIA requirements labeled as "desired" are to be viewed as additional requirements that are nice to have but are not currently mandatory.

It can be seen from even the most casual observation that the requirements for the PM position category are very strict and progressive in nature as the individual moves up through the three career levels. The requirements for the PM career field do not end when an officer becomes Level III certified. The officers that reach this level of certification must clear even more hurdles in order to become a PM or Deputy PM of a major defense acquisition program (MDAP) or significant non-major defense program. A MDAP is generally categorized as a program that will have a total expenditure for research, development, test and evaluation (RDT&E) of more than 200 million dollars in fiscal year (FY) 1980 constant dollars, or total expenditures of more than one billion in FY 1980 constant dollars. This definition is synonymous with ACAT I programs [Ref. 20:p. x]. A significant non-major defense acquisition program is the equivalent to an ACAT II program. An ACAT II program is one that is estimated to have RDT&E expenditures of more than 75 million constant 1980

dollars or an eventual total procurement cost in excess of 300 million dollars [Ref. 20:p. xii].

In order for a Lieutenant Colonel that is Level III certified to become a PM or Deputy PM of a significant nonmajor defense acquisition program (ACAT II) the officer must possess an additional two years of acquisition experience, for a total of six years of experience [Ref. 20:p. A.1-12]. The experience bar is raised another notch in order to qualify as a PM or Deputy PM for a MDAP (ACAT I). The prospective officer must accumulate a total of eight years of experience in the acquisition field to qualify for these positions of responsibility [Ref. 20:p. A.1-13].

If this is not enough, the preconditions that must be met to qualify as a Program Executive Officer (PEO) require that the PEO hopeful have previously held a PM or Deputy PM position and have accumulated ten years of acquisition experience [Ref. 20:p. A.1-10]. This is deemed essential because as a PEO a general officer will oversee a multitude of ACAT I and II programs worth billions of dollars.

With these requirements in mind, the challenge for the Marine Corps becomes one of creating a systematic way to facilitate a method for significant numbers of acquisition officers to receive the required education, training and experience needed to eventually staff the CAPs and PM positions within the APC. Dealing with this issue is where the Corps is encountering its management difficulties.

Meeting the educational requirements are generally not a problem for unrestricted officers. The vast majority of unrestricted officers are required to possess baccalaureate degrees upon receiving their commissions as Marine Officers. However, the Corps is currently having difficulties meeting the Level I and II training and experience requirements necessary to eventually qualify an adequate pool of officers to compete for MDAP PM positions. The remainder of this chapter will discuss the reason that the Marine Corps is having difficulties with DAWIA mandated

training requirements and look for an alternate way for acquisition officers to receive the required training. Chapter IV will be devoted to the study of the difficulties experienced in fulfilling experience requirements.

Level I and II mandatory training requirements consist of two DAU courses: Fundamentals of Systems Acquisition Management (ACQ 101) and Intermediate Systems Acquisition (ACQ 201) with course lengths of nine days and 20 days respectively. These two courses are taught in residence by the Defense Systems Management College and the Air Force Institute of Technology. The Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) and the Naval Center for Acquisition Training (NCAT) are preparing to offer ACQ 201 in the summer of 1996. ACQ 201 may also be taught on-site at the request of major acquisition commands that can demonstrate a need and show a cost savings. The Marine Corps currently receives a prorated share of the available quotas based on the size of its workforce. The 600 or so military officers in the Acquisition Corps is a small fraction of the 114,000 personnel that are involved in acquisition throughout DOD. Approximately 92,000 of these DOD acquisition personnel require the ACQ 101 and ACQ 201 as part of there mandatory training requirements. Correspondingly, the Marine Corps Acquisition Workforce receives a very limited number of school quotas. The current requirement for school seats for the ACQ 101 and 201 courses at the Marine Corps Systems Command alone is in the range of 150 and 250 seats respectively. The Marine Corps allotment of school seats has historically been 30 seats per year for ACQ 101 and 40 seats per year for ACQ 201. With this small number of school seats available it may be difficult at best to satisfy the backlog for these two courses through DAU classes alone [Ref. 25]. If the Marine Corps' fair share of quotas for these two classes amounts to only approximately 30 or 40 class seats per year, what other, if any, avenues are available for

Marine officers to receive this training? The next section of this chapter will be devoted to answering this question.

D. ANALYSIS OF THE INTERACTION BETWEEN THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AND THE ACQUISITION CORPS

The challenge when looking for alternate sources for PM training is to find a surrogate that is able to provide training that is recognized as being a suitable substitute to the training given in the DAU system. There are currently no civilian colleges or universities that offer training in this area that are recognized as having suitable substitute courses [Ref. 24]. There are however, two DOD schools that are DAU certified to provide instruction in the PM subject area.

The first organization that offers training in this area is the Contracting and Acquisition Training Facility located at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. This facility offers a very limited amount of training in the PM arena. They only offer substitute training for the nine day ACQ 101 course required for the basic Level I certification.

The second DOD organization that offers training directed towards PMs, and acquisition professionals in general, is the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) located in Monterey, California. Nearly 2,000 students attend NPS. The student body consists of officers from the five uniformed Services, 37 allied countries and a small number of Government civil servants. The school exists:

For the sole purpose of increasing the combat effectiveness of the Navy and Marine Corps. It accomplishes this by providing post-baccalaureate degree and nondegree programs in a variety of subspecialty areas not available through other educational institutions. [Ref. 26:p. 7]

The NPS Department of Systems Management has developed and currently teaches a variety of curriculum specifically devoted to the development of the

prospective acquisition professional. The first of these curricula is specifically devoted to the professional development of the prospective PM.

The Systems Acquisition Management curriculum is a seven quarter interdisciplinary program designed to integrate business principles, management theory, operational and systems analysis and engineering applications tailored to Defense acquisition management. The specific academic requirements of the curriculum can be viewed in Figure 3.4.

Quarter	Hours	Course Title
Quarter 1		
MN2150	(4-0)	Financial Accounting
MN2031	(4-0)	Economic Decision Making
MN3333	(4-0)	Managerial Communication Skills
MA2300	(5-0)	Mathematics for Management
MN2303	(0-2)	Seminar for Program Management Students
IS0123	(0-2)	Computer Skills Development (as required)
Quarter 2		
MN3161	(4-0)	Management Accounting
MN3140	(4-0)	Microeconomic Theory
MN3301	(4-0)	Systems Acquisition and Program Management
OS3105	(4-0)	Statistical Analysis for Management
MN2303	(0-2)	Seminar for Program Management Students
Quarter 3		
MN3105	(4-0)	Organization and Management
MN3371	(4-0)	Contracts Management and Administration
IS3183	(4-0)	Management Information Systems
OS3006	(4-0)	Operations Research for Management Students
MN2303	(0-2)	Seminar for Program Management Students
Quarter 4		
MN4310	(4-0)	Logistics Engineering
MN4145	(4-0)	Policy Analysis
MN3309	(4-0)	Acquisition of Embedded Weapon Systems Software
MN3154	(4-0)	Financial Management in the Armed Forces
MN2303	(0-2)	Seminar for Program Management Students

Figure 3.4. Systems Acquisition Management Curriculum Requirements

Quarter	Hours	Course Title
Quarter 5		
MN3172	(4-0)	Public Policy and Budgeting
OS3302	(4-0)	Quality Assurance and Reliability Methods
MN4999	(4-0)	Curriculum Option
MN0810	(0-8)	Thesis Research
MN2303	(0-2)	Seminar for Program Management Students
Quarter 6		
OS4601	(4-0)	Test and Evaluation
NS3252	(4-0)	Joint and Maritime Strategic Planning
EO4011	(3-1)	Systems Engineering for Acquisition Managers
MN0810	(0-8)	Thesis Research
MN3311	(1-2)	Program Management Exercise
Quarter 7		
MN4307	(4-0)	Program Management Policy and Control
MN4105	(4-0)	Strategic Management
MN0810	(0-8)	Thesis Research
MN0810	(0-8)	Thesis Research
MN2303	(0-2)	Seminar for Program Management Students

Source: [Ref. 26]

Figure 3.4 (Continued)

Successful completion of the NPS course of study is recognized by the DAU system as being a comparable substitute to the PMT 301 or PMT 302 courses given by the Defense Systems Management College [Ref. 24:p. D-3]. Completion of this curriculum also confers a Master's Degree and gives credit for one year of acquisition experience. The successful graduate is fully Level III certified in both the education and training requirements for Program Management. As an added bonus, the graduates of this program also receive equivalency for Level III training requirements in the Test and Evaluation career field and Level II training in Systems Engineering [Ref. 27]. The Marine Corps presently schedules approximately five officers to attend this curriculum each year. A graduate from this curriculum would

be qualified from a training perspective to fill 70 percent of the Marine Corps AWF billets.

The second curriculum devoted to training acquisition professionals is the six quarter Acquisition and Contract Management curriculum. This curriculum gives the officer the Level II contracting requirements and none of the PM or other qualifications of the Systems Acquisition Management program. Officers that complete this course of study are qualified to fill one of the 22 Marine Corps contracting billets. These billets comprise merely 3.6 percent of the Marine AWF billets. The Marine Corps schedules approximately seven officers each year to attend this curriculum. From a billet staffing viewpoint, an officer graduating from Systems Acquisition Management Program is much more versatile for billet assignment and would be qualified by virtue of NPS training to fill 70 percent of the billets identified in the Marines' AWF. Given these facts, the Marine Corps may want to reevaluate the numbers of officers sent to NPS in these two curricula and the type and amount of acquisition training that they receive.

A third option exists to give prospective acquisition professionals PM training without completing the entire course of academic requirements outlined in Figure 3.4. Successful completion of just two NPS courses can be substituted for the Level I and II PM training requirements. Principles of Program Management I (MN3221) and Principles of Management II (MN3222) are recognized by the DAU system as being fully accredited substitutes for Level I (ACQ 101) and Level II (ACQ 201) DAU taught PM courses. These two courses are offered to students in any NPS curriculum. Any Marine officer attending NPS may enroll in these classes.

The Marine Corps currently takes advantage of the educational opportunities provided by the NPS by sending 75 officers to study one of 18 different curricula each year. The different curricula offered are shown in Figure 3.5 along with a breakdown

of the number of officers currently studying in each. [Ref. 28] These officers volunteer for this duty and are board selected through the Special Education Program

MOS	Name	# @ NPS	# SEP Billets	# Desig Acq	% Desig Acq
9650	Ops Analysis	25	44	4	9
9658	C-3	7	13	4	31
9666	Space Syst Ops	4	10	0	0
9646	Comp Science	23	45	29	64
9648	ITM	28	67	15	22
9670	Applied Math	2	3	0	0
9626	Wpns Syst Eng	2	2	1	50
9624	Electronics Eng	23	25	20	83
9666	Space Syst Eng	2	10	0	0
9634	Electrical Warfare Syst	2	2	0	0
9620	Aerospace Eng	1	4	0	0
9656	Contracting	9	21	21	100
9657	Syst Acq Management	6	5	5	100
9652	Defense Syst Analysis	9	16	3	19
9662	Mat Log Management	3	10	3	30
9644	Financial Management	11	42	2	5
9640	Manpower Management	13	20	0	0
TOTAL		170	340	107	31

Source: Developed by Researcher.

Figure 3.5. SEP and the AWF

(SEP). They are assigned a secondary MOS in the 9600 series for tracking purposes. Upon completion of their program of study each officer may not tender his resignation for a period of four years and will immediately begin serving a three year tour in a billet that has been designated as requiring a graduate level education. These billets are affectionately known as "payback" billets among the students at NPS. These billets were developed separately and distinctly from the acquisition billets included by the Marine Corps in the AWF. However, there is a great deal of crossover into acquisition for many of these billets. For example, MOS 9642 which is the SEP MOS for an Electronics Systems Engineer, currently has 23 Marine officers studying at NPS. There are 25 SEP "payback" billets identified for these individuals to fill. Twenty of these 25, or 83 percent of these "payback" billets are also identified in the Marine Corps AWF billet structure.

The amount of overlap between the two classes of billets varies greatly. As would be expected, both the Contracting and Systems Acquisition Management programs have 100 percent commonalty between the two types of billets. This is in stark contrast to some of the more technical programs such as Applied Math and Space Systems Engineering which have no commonalty between the two billets. Viewed in the aggregate, 107 of 340 SEP billets (31 percent) require the individual to have at least some acquisition training when reporting for duty. Since 31 percent of all SEP graduates will immediately fill acquisition billets and require subsequent acquisition training, (ACQ 101 and ACQ 201) it warrants consideration that some or all SEP students receive such training while it is readily available at NPS, rather than compete for limited Marine Corps quotas along with the other 94,000 DOD AWF members that require these classes. Since there is nearly one third commonalty between SEP billets and the AWF, it may be beneficial to use the SEP program as an education and training pipeline into the AWF.

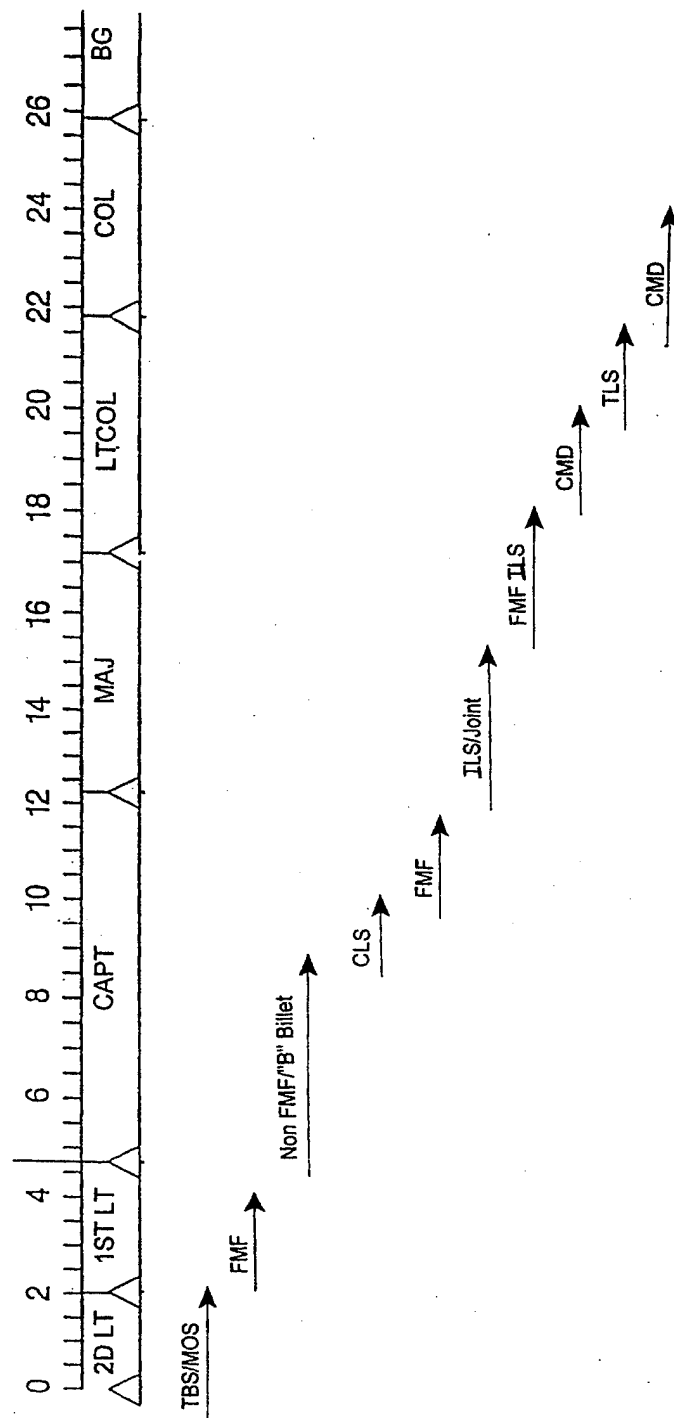
The next chapter will look at the current non-acquisition career path that Marine officers follow and then analyze how the traditional career track would need to be modified in order to accommodate an officer who desires to make a career choice and enter the Marine AWF. The chapter will also analyze a past effort to have institutionalized modifications made to the non-acquisition career track in order to accommodate acquisition officers.

IV. ANALYSIS OF NON-ACQUISITION AND ACQUISITION CAREER PATHS

A. CURRENT NON-ACQUISITION CAREER PATH

Before this research effort launches into a study and analysis of the current acquisition career path, it is necessary to gain a basic understanding of the generic non-acquisition career track that most officers use as a guide for career progression. It is also important to develop a feel for the underlying principles and constraints that govern the makeup of this pathway. In order to properly motivate young officers, it's imperative that each officer has the belief that if he or she works hard enough and has the proper billet progression, the opportunity to reach the general officer grades will be a possibility. This is a primary motive for creating a career path from the rank of Second Lieutenant to General. This is not to suggest that there is one typical way of becoming a General officer. A reading of ten different general officers' biographies will likely indicate there is probably not a "typical" way of becoming a general. General officers come from a wide variety of the communities within the Marine Corps and have had a wealth of different assignments and experiences during their time in the Corps. There are however certain common bricks that are the building blocks or cornerstones in every senior officer's pursuit for general officer rank. Some of these bricks are mandated by law or statute and others are placed in the career path by Marine Corps doctrine and policy.

There are five prime elements that are related to the makeup of a career path in general. The five elements are: promotion flow points, MOS credibility and experience, military education and training, joint duty assignments and command selection and performance. Figure 4.1 is the typical path that is used as a guide for Marine Officers to follow as they progress through their years in the Corps. It contains the essence of the five prime elements listed above.



Source: Developed by Researcher.

Figure 4.1. Generic Officer Career Track

1. Promotion Flowpoints

Figure 4.1 shows the current flow points for promotion as triangles along the horizontal axis. These desired promotion points are established by DOD and tend to be relatively stable in the short run. In the long run the flow points to the grades of Major and above can vary by as much as a year. For purposes of this study the researcher assumes that the promotion points will not vary enough to have a significant impact on the overall career path.

The figure shows that the newly commissioned Second Lieutenant can expect to be promoted to Captain after accumulating two years commissioned service (YCS), become a field grade officer at 12 YCS and become a Colonel at about 22 YCS.

Promotion is by no means automatic. DOD goals for promotion to Major, Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel are 70,60 and 50 percent respectively. The remaining four elements have a great influence over whether an officer will be considered to be competitive for promotion as he approaches each successive promotion point.

2. MOS Credibility and Experience

MOS credibility and experience are the foundation of a Marine Officer's career and a heavily weighted factor when being screened for promotion. Figure 4.1 shows that an optimal non-acquisition career track alternates between tours in the Fleet Marine Force (FMF) and periods of assignment to non-FMF duties. These include such assignments as recruiting, recruit training and various staff functions that may or may not be related to an officer's primary MOS.

Performance in these duties is just as important as performance in any FMF billet. However, since these functions are normally outside the traditional roles of Marine combat arms, time spent in these billets tends not to be viewed as valuable to an officer's career as similar time spent in an FMF billet.

To further illustrate the point, let's look at the case of three fictitious infantry Majors coming in zone for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel. Major number one has spent the previous five years as the operations officer and executive officer of a deploying infantry battalion. Major number two also spent a three-year tour as an operations officer within an infantry unit and the remainder of the five years as the executive officer of a recruiting district (non-FMF tour). Major number three spent the first two years as a Major as a Marine Officer Instructor, training NROTC students and then followed that tour with a staff assignment at the Pentagon. Both of these are non FMF tours. Assuming that all three Majors received identical fitness reports, the nod for promotion would most likely go to Majors number one and two.

While Major number one has not spent any time in a non-FMF, tour and consequently not followed the desired career path, this officer has spent time in billets that are institutionalized within the Corps as being "where the rubber meets the road." An officer generally will not be penalized for promotion for not serving in a non-FMF tour. Major number two has a good balance of both FMF and non-FMF experience and will be viewed as having the proper career progression and likely be a promotable asset. Major number three however has not spent any time in his MOS at his present grade. If selected for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel he would be expected to be able to command a battalion of Marine warriors into battle. It is doubtful that this individual would be given such opportunity if competing with the other two Majors because of a lack of experience and knowledge of the inner workings of a Marine battalion as a Major.

Performance within any assigned billet is more important than the type of billet assigned. In the previous example we assumed that each Major had identical fitness evaluations. Using the same three Majors and billets assignments the effects of varying the levels of performance can be better understood.

If Majors number one and two had been evaluated as being "middle of the pack" officers as compared to their contemporaries, and the third Major (with only non-FMF experience) was consistently head and shoulders above his counterparts the promotion outlook could change. Major number three could now be viewed as the most promotable within the lot while the promotability of the other two officers may be suspect.

The bottom line in managing billet assignments is that superior performance in any billet or set of positions can outweigh any negative connotations that the appointment may carry. It is important for any officer to attempt to control effectively the type of billets to which they may be assigned, but if dealt a poor hand, remember that superior sustained performance is usually the key to promotability.

3. Military Education and Training

The next prime element that has a major bearing on career path development is military education and training. Each officer, in the course of alternating between FMF and non-FMF tours, will attend or be screened to attend four major military schools during their careers.

The basic principle behind these four schools is much the same as the principle behind the enactment of the DAWIA legislation for acquisition professionals described in Chapter II. DAWIA was an attempt to place the required emphasis on the training and experience necessary for individuals to be selected to serve in the acquisition corps and better assure their success in their assigned POSCATs. Military education and training places the required emphasis on the training and experience necessary for officers to succeed in their MOS and prepare them for positions of greater responsibility and rank.

The first school in the hierarchy of these four schools is The Basic School (TBS). The name "The Basic School" is an appropriate description of the school's

function. It is essentially a six-month elementary education on the functions of the Marine Corps and the roles and responsibilities that each officer is expected to fill upon assignment to an FMF unit.

The officers receive a basic level of understanding of small unit tactics and are given their first opportunity to lead by assuming leadership positions within the student company. The Lieutenants are all drilled with the axiom that "every Marine is a rifleman" and is first and foremost expected to be competent in the role of infantry officer. Every Marine officer attends this school. Therefore there is no selection process involved to choose the attendees. The first level of military education that utilizes a screening and selection board is the Command Level Schools (CLS).

The CLS Selection board meets yearly to select officers to attend the next evolutionary step in the Marine Corps military education system. The board screens all eligible Captains and Captain selects to attend this level of schooling based on the individual officer's prior performance, career potential, availability for assignment and, as always, the needs of the Marine Corps.

CLS is not a single school, but a consortium of different schools that go beyond the elementary education that officers received at TBS. Some of the more technical MOSs such as Communications and Intelligence have their own schools dedicated to provide this more advanced education. Some of the schools are taught by other branches of the military. For example, the Marines currently send a significant number of artillery officers to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, to attend the advanced artillery officer course taught by the Army.

The largest single number of officers attend the Amphibious Warfare School (AWS). The school is taught by the Marine Corps, is ten months in length, builds upon the information that each officer was taught at TBS, and draws from their experiences brought with them from the FMF. In simplest terms, if TBS were an

elementary level of education on the art of modern warfare, AWS is a secondary or collegiate level of instruction.

Not every Captain is afforded the opportunity to attend a CLS in residence. Approximately one third of the eligible officers will attend in residence and the remaining officers are expected to complete a comprehensive correspondence course that is monitored by the individuals commanding officer. Completion of one of the two formats of the AWS course is mandatory.

The next step in the developmental chain that a Marine officer can aspire to is the attendance of Intermediate Level Schools (ILS). If CLS attendance is analogous to a collegiate education, ILS is akin to a graduate education. It is so much like a graduate education that with successful completion of the Marine Corps Command and Staff College and a minimal number of semester hours from a satellite university, a Master's Degree may be awarded.

The selection criteria for the Majors are much the same as that described for the Captains attending CLS. Once again, past performance and further career potential are emphasized in the selection process.

CLS is also a consortium of schools. Marines may be selected to attend the Army Command and Staff College, the Air Force Institute of Technology or the Naval War College to satisfy ILS requirements. This course is also available by correspondence and completion of one of the two forms of the course is a mandatory requirement to remain competitive for promotion.

The pinnacle of the Marine military education system is Top Level Schooling (TLS). This is truly the equivalent of a Ph.D. in military studies. The Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels selected to attend are considered the top of the officer corps.

Selection for attendance as a Lieutenant Colonel is a significant indicator that promotion to colonel will follow. In fact, recent Colonel selection results show that

a Lieutenant Colonel that had completed TLS had an amazing 90 percent promotion opportunity versus a 44.4 percent selection rate for the general population of Lieutenant Colonels [Ref. 29]. Selection for the school does not differ significantly from the methods and criteria used on any of the other competitive boards. Given the promotion rate differential, attendance at a TLS should be something to which every Marine Officer aspires.

It can be seen from this discussion of the Marine Corps education and training system that the same "tool box" concept, described for DAWIA mandated training in Chapter II, is used to develop Marine officers in the art of modern warfare. Marines begin work on building and filling their tool box at TBS and continue the construction effort throughout their careers and eventually complete the process upon completion of TLS.

The next prime element to be discussed will be the importance of successful completion of a joint duty tour with one of the non-Department of the Navy Services.

4. Joint Duty Assignments

The late 1970's and early 1980's was a time of reflection for the military Services and for Congress. It was a time to look for lessons learned from the Vietnam conflict and other military actions of that era including the failed Iranian hostage rescue attempt. This internal look or self reflection resulted in congressional action designed to streamline the way the individual branches of the Service operate in military operations that utilize more than one branch of the Service. The major piece of legislation to emerge from this internal reflection was the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 [Ref. 30]. One of the major thrusts of this legislation was to insure that every general officer had the opportunity to work closely with his counterparts in the other Services at some time in his career after reaching the grade of Captain.

The Goldwater-Nichols Act codified this congressional desire into law. The Act specifically states that "an officer may not be selected for promotion to the grade of brigadier general or rear admiral (lower half) unless the officer has served in a joint duty assignment" [Ref. 30:p. Sec. 404]. In order for an officer to be designated as a joint specialist he must successfully complete an appropriate program at a joint professional military education school (ILS) and complete a full three-year tour in a joint duty assignment.

There are three cases when waivers to this statute may be obtained from the Secretary of Defense or his delegated authority. The first is when it is required for the good of the Service. The second is when an officer whose proposed selection for promotion is based primarily upon scientific and technical qualifications for which joint requirements do not exist. And the last is a blanket waiver for medical and dental officers [Ref. 30:Sec. 404].

These waiver provisions are limited in their applicability. For all practical purposes, any aspiring officer must provide for this assignment when attempting to map a promotion path to the general officer grades.

5. Command Selection and Performance

The final element that has bearing on career path development is the element of selection and successful completion of a period of time spent while holding a major command. Major command is defined as battalion level or higher within the combat arms fields and squadron level or higher within aviation units. This generally limits major command opportunities to the grade of Lieutenant Colonel and above.

Command screening and selection are often the high water mark of an officer's career. The responsibility and accountability for the actions of entire unit can be awesome. Therefore, the Marine Corps screens and selects the officers given the opportunity of command very carefully and methodically.

Not every Lieutenant Colonel is afforded the opportunity to command. The command screening process begins shortly after the Lieutenant Colonel promotion board makes its yearly selections. The command screening board then convenes and develops a list of officers that they feel has the necessary prerequisites to lead large groups of Marines. This list consists of roughly 50 percent of the officers that originally made the cut to Lieutenant Colonel. The list is then compared to the number of commands coming available and officers are slated to each command. This results in approximately 50 percent of the eligible officers that successfully made it past the command screening board being slated for command. If the math is carried out to the conclusion it becomes evident that only one out of four newly promoted Lieutenant Colonels will ever be given the privilege of command.

The process is virtually identical for the Colonel's command selection process. The only noticeable difference is that the size of the command is greater and therefore the responsibilities of command are greater in scope.

The previous discussion shows that there are many wickets to pass through along what is deemed to be the generic career path. That may be the very reason that there are so few general officers that have followed this path to its conclusion. Figure 4.1 graphically depicts what demands that each of the five prime elements of a career path place upon an officer's time. It is nearly impossible for every officer to follow this career track in its entirety. There are tradeoffs that must be made along the way.

If an officer's slate is already full, what changes must be made in order to accommodate the needs of acquisition officers and the demands of the Marine Corps in general? The next section will look at the structure of the generic career path as acquisition requirements are layered in.

B. ACQUISITION CAREER PATH

The major difference to becoming a general officer in the acquisition corps verses a General under the generic career path is the additional requirement of ten years of acquisition experience, four of which must have been gained while serving in a critical acquisition position. The officer must also continue to meet the three-year joint duty assignment levied by Goldwater- Nichols. In all practicality, to be competitive for selection, the officer should have attended either ILS or TLS in residence and served at least one three-year command or FMF tour as a lieutenant Colonel or Colonel.

These requirements can be easily applied to Majors that have just become Level III certified in their career fields with three years of prior acquisition experience (e.g., two years of actual experience and one year of credit for education) in order to see what affect it might have on their career paths. In order for Majors to meet the minimum requirements for selection as a general officer they would require an additional 14 years of assignments. They must obtain an additional seven years of acquisition experience, a three-year joint tour, one year for either ILS or TLS and three years for a command or FMF tour.

It can be seen in Figure 4.1 that the average time for promotion to Brigadier General from Major is 13.5 years. It is simply not possible to fit 14 years' worth of assignments into a 13.5-year block of time. One must also remember that ten of the 14 years are mandated by law (seven years additional acquisition experience and three year joint duty assignment). If the Marine Corps decided to pare six months off of the four year block of time that it directly controls (ILS, TLS and command or FMF tour), the most logical solution would be to eliminate six months of the command or FMF tour requirement. This would be a technically feasible solution. There would now be 13.5 years of assignments to fit into a 13.5-year block of time. However, there are

still no provisions for alternating between FMF and non-FMF tours. In reality such officers could only spend two and one half years in the FMF from the grade of Major to Brigadier General. This violates one of the basic assumptions laid out at the beginning of this study: that the Marine Corps values the experience brought to the acquisition process from recent FMF experience and will not discontinue tour alternation. It is also doubtful that such officers would remain competitive with his contemporaries given the current emphasis placed on MOS credibility by promotion boards.

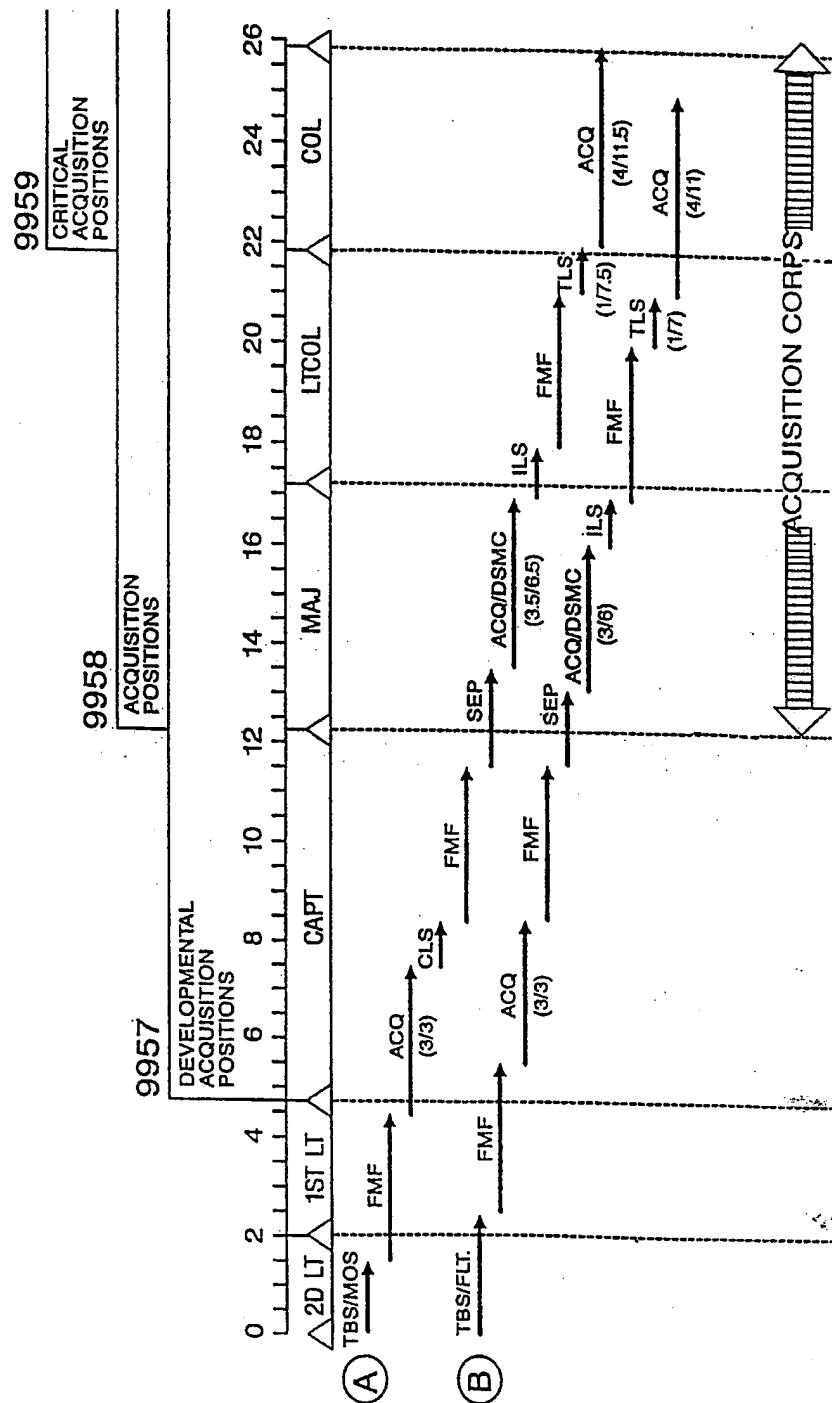
Unless the Marine Corps is willing to radically alter its views on the desirability of having officers with recent FMF experience in the acquisition corps, this career track will have a difficult time attracting and retaining the quality officers that the Marines Corps requires to fill its acquisition positions.

Given this situation, how then should the Marine Corps go about developing a stimulating and challenging career flow that achieves all the obligatory duty requirements needed to keep acquisition officers competitive for promotion? A review of previous career path research is in order.

C. ANALYSIS OF PREVIOUS CAREER PATH RESEARCH

Landmark research in this area was conducted by Colonel Reed T. Bolick USMC (Retired) soon after passage of the DAWIA statute and very early in the Marine Corps' implementation process in 1992. He recognized that one of the keys to answering this question comes in the timing of an officer's first acquisition tour [Ref. 31].

Figure 4.2 graphically illustrates the direction that he thought that the Marine Corps should take when developing a career track for the acquisition corps. The culmination of his research effort was the development of two separate but similar career tracks. Track A is a pattern of service developed for ground officers and track



Source: [Ref. 31]

Figure 4.2. USMC Acquisition Workforce Career Profile

B applies to aviation officers. The development of two separate tracks recognizes the longer period of time that is required for aviation officers to complete initial flight training. Both tracks met the DAWIA requirements that were in place at that time [Ref. 31:p. 34].

The postulated paths recognize that both the Marine Corps and the individual will have to make some sacrifices in order for the system to work. Instead of being available to serve in a variety of non-FMF assignments, an officer electing to be in the AWF simply alternates between FMF and acquisition related assignments. The only variable in either of the paths comes from success or failure for selection to participate in the Professional Military Education process.

As Colonel Bolick showed in path A, a ground officer could attain an advanced degree by participating in the Special Education Program (SEP), attend the appropriate PME, achieve more than ten years of acquisition experience required for selection to General, and still have had the opportunity to be in the FMF at the appropriate time to command through the battalion level. This is made possible by the officer obtaining acquisition experience early in his career. This enables him to get out and remain in front of the experience power curve for the remainder of his acquisition career.

Path B differed from path A in that it did not afford an opportunity for career level school and allowed only 18 months to attain an advanced degree. The requirement for a Master's Degree at that time was mandated by the Department of the Navy and was not a DAWIA or DOD requirement. Colonel Bolick recommended that the Marine Corps seek exemption from that added burden. The mandatory requirement has since been dropped but is still a "desired" element by DAWIA standards. This frees up additional time for additional experience either in the FMF or AWF.

While the proposed career pattern fulfilled the requirements of the DAWIA, it did not accommodate the requirements of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 for a joint duty assignment. This was not an inadvertent omission. The reasoning for excluding this assignment follows.

In his February 1989 address to the Joint Session of Congress, President Bush announced that he was directing the Secretary of Defense to develop a "plan to improve the defense procurement process and management of the Pentagon." Terms of reference provided by the president called upon DOD to:

Develop a plan to accomplish full implementation of the recommendations of the Packard Commission and to realize substantial improvement...in defense management overall. [Ref. 3:p. 1]

This Defense Management Review (DMR) as it became known, examined the various efforts to that date to realize the far-reaching improvements envisioned both by the Packard Commission and the Goldwater-Nichols Act. They found that while there had been progress in implementing the findings and recommendations of these two bodies, DOD needed to redouble its efforts.

Among other things the DMR specifically directed the Secretaries of the Military Departments, working with the Service Chiefs, to develop and submit for the Secretary of Defense's consideration, plans for establishment of a dedicated corps of officers in each Service who will make a full-time career as acquisition specialists. They were to identify recommended means to insure:

- Selection of highly promising officers early in their careers;
- Timely specialization in acquisition, including the election of such career paths by officers with some significant operational experience;

- Assignment, other than in exceptional cases, to acquisition positions and related training once selected;
- Creation of attractive and equitable career paths, including designation of corps-eligible positions; and
- Assurance of promotion potential up to the highest flag grades.

The resulting Department of the Navy's Plans for Initial Implementation of the Defense Management Report responded:

The ability of the Department of the Navy to implement the plan with respect to Unrestricted Line-Material Professional and AM Acquisition Material officers is contingent upon a determination by the Secretary of Defense to designate such officers as technical specialists and thereby waive requirements of current law for promotion to flag/general officer. Such a waiver will be necessary because of the general impracticability, if not impossibility, of providing officers with both the joint experience required by statute and the intensive acquisition experience required under the plan. [Ref. 32:p. 8]

On 31 January 1990, the Secretary of the Navy indicated that the Implementation Plan (containing the above recommendation) had been approved by the Secretary of Defense and was to be executed. Colonel Bolick felt that this should provide adequate justification for the Marine Corps to seek waivers where necessary. This reasoning resulted in his omitting the JDA requirement from his career tracks.

This chapter has analyzed the difficulties associated with the development of a dedicated career path for acquisition designated individuals and looked at one proposed solution to the problem. The next chapter will attempt to draw together the information provided in the previous two chapters to suggest a comprehensive process

for accessing, training and developing a proper career path for acquisition professionals into a clear and concise campaign plan for action.

V. A CAMPAIGN PLAN FOR THE FUTURE OF THE MARINE CORPS' AWF

A. RECOMMENDATIONS

The research in the previous chapters shows that the Marine Corps has had some success in growing its fledgling AWF since its beginnings in 1991. The research has also answered the four subsidiary research questions posed in Chapter I. It has identified the legal statutes and regulations that govern the framework of the Marine Corps Officer AWF. The research has explained how the Marine Corps currently accesses officers into the AWF. It identified the educational requirements that a member of the AWF must meet and finally, it identified alternate educational programs that could be utilized to fulfill these educational requirements.

The successful answering of the four subsidiary research questions now enables the researcher to pull together information that was gathered during the investigation process and offer a framework or systematic "Campaign Plan" of action for the future that will ensure the AWF's continued viability into the next century while answering the primary research question of:

How can the Marine Corps Acquisition Workforce best be directed to ensure a sufficient number of Marine officers are accessed, trained and gain the experience necessary to staff the Marine Corps' critical acquisition positions?

The answer to this question is multi-faceted. There is no single suggestion or recommendation that may be offered that will adequately answer the primary research question. The answer instead, lies in the adoption of a number of suggestions disclosed by the research. These recommendations will transform the accession, training and experience gaining process into a smooth cohesive system that will offer

job satisfaction and unlimited career potential for any officer that chooses to make acquisition a career choice.

- 1. Redirect Focus from Acquisition Managers to the Bottom of the Acquisition Pyramid**

The first change that the Marine Corps needs to make with regard to the AWF is primarily one of focus. Up until now the Corps has been primarily concerned with the final product of the accession and training process. The final output in this case being the fully qualified 9959, Acquisition Manager. This occurred primarily because DAWIA requirements were implemented over a relatively short period of time (in relation to the amount of time required to fully qualify a 9959) and there was a requirement to have fully DAWIA qualified officers identified and in place managing the few Marine Corps ACAT I&II programs posthaste. This requirement caused the Marine Corps to scan the personnel horizon for officers that, through mostly their own efforts, had achieved the proper credentials to assume PM positions. The language of the first ALMAR issued to solicit applications for the 9959 MOS reflects this sense of urgency when it stated that "The focus of this first board will be on Program Managers. Accordingly, it will select only those qualified officers as Acquisition Professionals who hold the requisite qualifications to fill billets as Program Managers" [Ref. 33p: 1]. The ALMAR did not solicit applications for APC membership to any career field other than Program Management.

This was an understandable reaction to a short fused requirement. The most recent ALMAR on this subject is more balanced and solicits applications for all career fields. But the high emphasis placed on attracting and selecting Acquisition Managers is still apparent when reading the language of the ALMAR [Ref. 34].

The researcher does not suggest that emphasis on selecting the right number of Acquisition Managers is unwarranted. After all, the whole purpose of the DAWIA statute was to ensure that only the most highly qualified individuals attain these senior

positions. The research indicates however that more attention needs to be paid to the bottom of the AWF pyramid. Figure 3.1 showed that the bottom of the AWF structure is too restricted to allow the proper number of captains to gain the necessary experience required for APC membership as a Major. Using the historical promotion rate of 70 percent from Captain to Major, this indicates that approximately 420 officers needed to gain acquisition experience as Captains in order to properly staff the 293 Majors' billets of the AWF. More attention needs to be focused on methods of broadening this base. The AWF structure is very analogous to a salmon run. In order to ensure the survival of the species, make sure that enough enter the cycle in the beginning. If large numbers enter, there will most certainly be enough survivors at the end of the journey to ensure their future viability. The remaining recommendations will be geared toward broadening the base of the AWF pyramid and identify methods to make AWF membership more attractive.

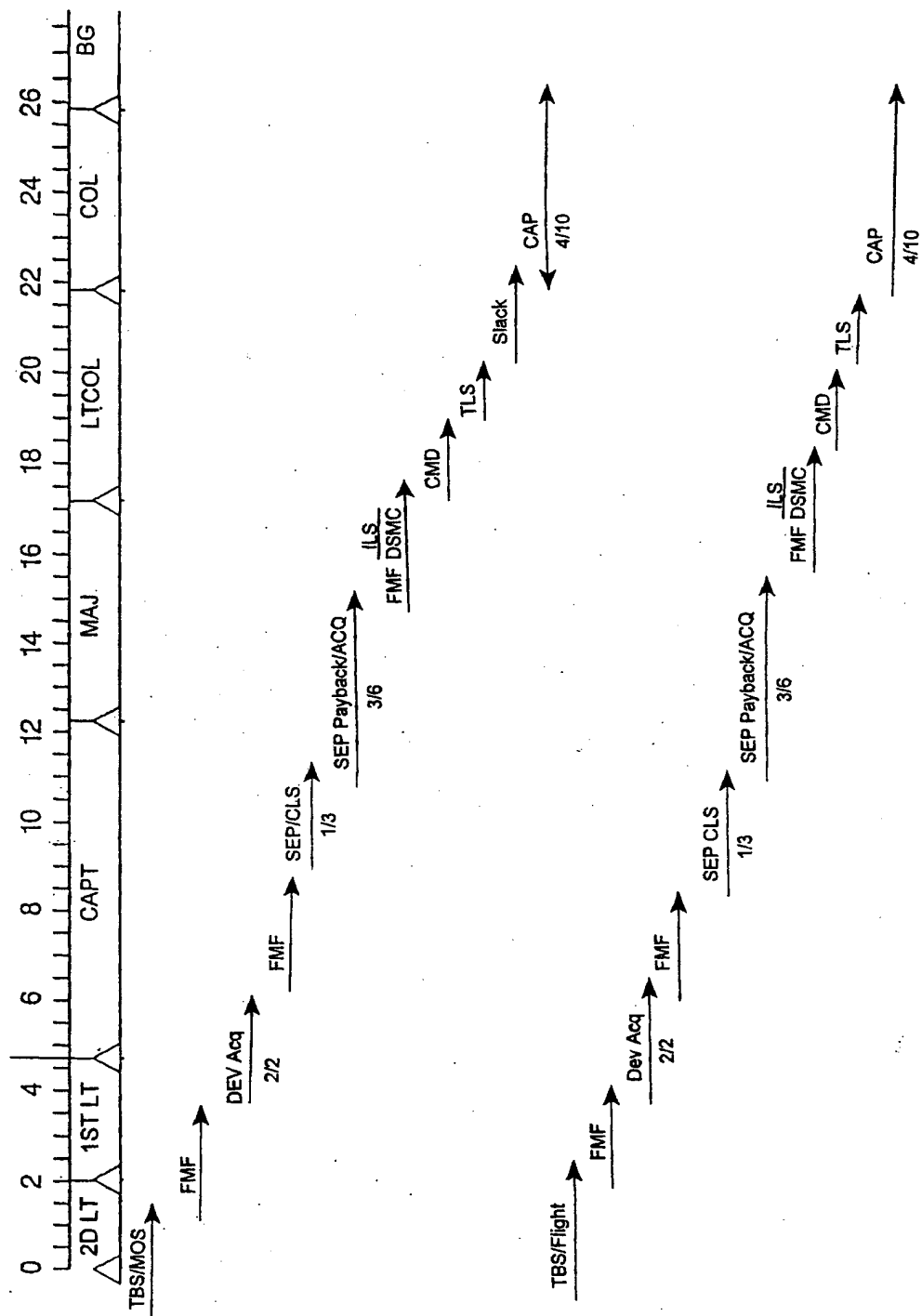
2. Acquisition MOS Realignment with Career Level Qualifications

The research also indicated that there is room for a great deal of confusion between the 9957, 9958 and 9958 MOSs and Career Level qualifications. It would be beneficial to reduce this confusion by aligning the MOSs more closely with Career Level attainment. One recommended alignment alternative would be as follows.

The 9957 MOS should be opened up to any Captain or Captain select possessing a Bachelor's Degree regardless of previous acquisition experience or training. The bachelor's degree requirement is intent upon screening out any restricted officers who have not attained a degree and would be ineligible for APC membership as a Major. The MOS would be used to identify officers who have the desire to work in the acquisition community. The MOS should also include individuals that have acquired Level I certification in any career field. Under this realignment not every 9957 would be immediately eligible for AWF membership. But every Career Level

I certified officer would be a 9957, eliminating half of the confusion associated with this MOS. Since the 9957 designation is not part of the APC or governed by the DAWIA statute, the Marine Corps could solicit applications and voluntarily or involuntarily select individuals subsequent to the yearly Captain's selection board. These officers would then be assigned to one of the 148 Captains' billets shown in Figure 3.1 for their first non-FMF tour of duty. These 148 Captain's billets would truly become the developmental acquisition billets for the Marine Corps. An officer should remain in this developmental billet for a period of two years as shown in Figure 5.1. The goal of this assignment period should be to attain Level I certification. The shorter than normal two-year assignment, versus three to four years for FMF tours, would allow more officers to gain experience and increase effectively the number of experienced officers available to fill the 293 Majors' billets without a corresponding increase in billet structure. This change would help toward alleviating the inverted pyramid design of the Marine AWF. Such assignment would also benefit the Marine Corps by giving a significant number of officers acquisition experience early in their careers. This would provide an early start towards the ten years of experience necessary to become a PEO as a general officer.

The 9958 MOS or Acquisition Management Officer designation would remain much the same as it is currently. A 9958 would still be required to possess Level II certification and meet the four-year experience requirement for APC membership. The 9957 realignment would reduce some confusion. For instance, the officers that previously would have found themselves ineligible for APC membership at this stage of their acquisition careers because of not having a Baccalaureate Degree, would have been screened out during the 9957 selection process.



Source: Developed by Researcher.

Figure 5.1. Recommended Acquisition Officer Career Track

The 9959 MOS, or Acquisition Manager title, would be reserved for officers who meet all the requirements for Career Level III certification and the additional requirements to fill a Critical Acquisition Position as explained in section C of Chapter III. The title should be changed to Acquisition Professional to recognize that a 9959 could come from any one of the DAWIA approved career fields, not only the PM career field as in the past. This change is recommended partially to eliminate the confusion between being Career Level III certified and meeting the requirements for ACAT I&II Program Manager duties. This change also helps to shift some of the focus away from the top of the acquisition hierarchy, and redirects the focus toward developing the large body of acquisition professionals from all of the position categories and ensures that an elitest or "all animals are created equal, but some are more equal than others" mentality does not prevail within the acquisition community. Another shortfall discovered is that there is little value added to using the 9959 MOS as a tracking mechanism to identify officers qualified to manage ACAT I and II programs. The Marine Corps currently has a total of two ACAT I and II programs to manage. The vast majority of Marine Corps programs fall into the ACAT III and IV category which may be headed by an individual that meets the critical acquisition position requirements [Ref. 35]. If the 9959 MOS is to be used as a tracking tool it would be much more effective to have the MOS attached to the larger body of officers qualified to manage the greater number of ACAT III and IV programs rather than the two ACAT I and II programs.

3. Cultivating the Special Education Program

This recommendation focuses on having the Special Education Program become a primary training source for acquisition professionals. The Marine Corps has accessed 575 individuals into the AWF. This has worked relatively well. But, in order to further increase the number of officers that are qualified for APC

membership, additional sources must be found and utilized. The SEP is an ideal breeding ground for such officers..

The Marine Corps has total control over this program and can modify entrance requirements to fit its needs. The Marine Corps could make acceptance to this program and assignment to NPS contingent upon officers agreeing to become an AWF and APC member when qualified. Precedent for these types of agreements has already been set within the Marine Corps. The Aviation community currently requires this agreement from the pilots that it selects to attend Test Pilot School [Ref. 36].

Every officer that attends NPS could be required to complete the core program management curriculum which consists of Principles of Program Management I (MN3221) and Principles of Program Management II (MN3222). This will give the Marine Corps 75 extra Marine officers per year that have completed Level II PM training requirements. This could very easily be accomplished in one of three ways depending on the SEP officer's current curriculum.

The five officers per year that currently attend the Systems Acquisition Management curriculum and are subsequently assigned the 9657 SEP MOS would require no changes to be made in their studies. They would attain all Career Level III training requirements in the PM and Test and Evaluation career fields along with Career Level II training in Systems Engineering during their normal course of studies.

The seven officers per year that attend the Acquisition and Contract Management curriculum could continue their studies towards becoming contracting officers and the 9656 SEP MOS, but could be required to add the core PM classes to their course work. This will not require any additional length in their assignment at NPS. Most of the officers chosen for this curriculum have attended some classes as an undergraduate that are similar or duplicated in their first two quarters of study at

NPS. Based on their past performance in these classes and upon the recommendations of their professors and Academic Associate they are excused from duplicating this coursework at NPS. This leaves adequate room in their schedules to add the two core PM classes. The successful graduate would then have both the Level II training requirements in contracting and program management. These officers would be capable of filling 70 percent of the billets in the Marine Corps AWF rather than the 3.6 percent if only taught the contracting curriculum. More importantly, these officers would have a much more viable career path within the AWF. Currently there are only 22 billets for these contracting officers throughout the Marine Corps. None of these 22 billets require an officer above the grade of Major or above Career Level II certification in contracting. In all likelihood, a graduate of the Acquisition and Contract Management curriculum will do only one three-year payback tour as a contracting officer and never return to the contracting field because no billets currently exist for them to fill at the Lieutenant Colonel level. This effectively ends their contracting careers. Under the proposed change these officers could continue their acquisition careers by moving into the PM career field after their initial tour in contracting. The individual officer benefits by having increased career potential. The Marine Corps benefits by having an increased number of school trained officers capable of handling PM responsibilities that also have an intimate knowledge of the contracting process.

The Marine officers in the remainder of the SEP MOSs could also be required to add the two core PM courses to their NPS studies. Many of these officers also receive credit for their undergraduate studies that opens room in their schedules for these two classes. Granted, there may occasionally be an officer without a previous background in their course work that will require an extra period of time to complete these classes. This may cause some resistance from their SEP Occupational Field

Sponsors who are anxious to put these officers to work in their newly acquired SEP skills. The sponsors must realize that by allowing their SEP students to attend the PM core classes while at NPS they will have them available for their whole three year SEP payback tour. The 31 percent of SEP graduates who are destined for acquisition designated payback tours would not have to vacate their billets within the first 18 months to attend the PM core courses once they reach the FMF. More importantly, the Marine Corps would not have to compete with the 94,000 other DOD AWF personnel that require these limited school quotas.

If the above recommendations are adopted, the Marine Corps could then assign the 9957 MOS to all officers that are chosen for the SEP immediately after their selection. They would meet all of the criteria described earlier in this chapter for the realigned 9957 MOS. The SEP students would have shown an interest in acquisition by virtue of applying to the SEP program, will receive the Career Level II, or above, program management training requirements during their coursework at NPS. Even more importantly they will also receive credit for one year of acquisition experience by virtue of pursuing an acquisition related education while at NPS.

The SEP program could also be used to incentivize AWF membership by giving first opportunity to attend NPS to officers that have shown a commitment to acquisition by having voluntarily been assigned the 9957 MOS and completing a two-year developmental acquisition tour. This tour could follow the Marine's second FMF tour and would fit well with the Marine Corps' desires to rotate between FMF and non-FMF tours as depicted in Figure 5.1. SEP trained officers could still complete a required payback tour in their area of acquired expertise after completing studies at NPS while 31 percent of the officers would gain an additional three years worth of acquisition experience. This would be in addition to the two years of acquisition experience gained in the developmental acquisition tour. Institutionally,

the Marine Corps could also help make this process more attractive to young company grade officers by officially recognizing SEP training as an equal substitute for CLS and officially adding it to the consortium list.

4. Create an Acquisition Career Path

The final major recommendation is for the development and implementation of a comprehensive acquisition career path. Figure 5.1 is a recommendation of how such a career path should be shaped. It is based on the previous work conducted by Colonel Bolick [Ref. 30] and incorporates the ramifications of the recommended changes discussed up to this point in the chapter. There are separate paths for both aviation and ground officers. There are several differences between the two paths. The first is a longer initial MOS training period for aviation officers that recognizes the lengthy demands of flight school. The second difference is a slightly longer first FMF tour to help reinforce initial flight skills prior to leaving the cockpit for a two-year developmental acquisition position. The overall effect of these two changes is to remove any slack from an aviator's career path. As shown in Figure 5.1 there is no period of slack or time that may be used to suit any purpose in an aviator's career track as compared with the proposed ground officer's career path. A ground officer would encounter a two year time period at around the 22 year mark of the officer's career that could be used to complete any career requirements that have not been previously met. The aviator does not have the same luxury. The aviator's tours subsequent to the first FMF assignment are delayed in relation to those of a ground officer because of the longer initial FMF tour. The proposed paths would make it possible for both officers to achieve and maintain MOS credibility by alternating between FMF and non-FMF tours. Each officer has the opportunity for SEP or CLS attendance followed by a SEP payback tour or acquisition tour, whichever is appropriate. In either case the acquisition officers are able to accumulate up to six

years of acquisition experience and will be eligible for APC membership as a Major. Front-loading the acquisition experience early in officers' careers frees them to be able to attend one, if not both ILS and TLS later in their careers. More significantly, it allows for a period of command.

The officers are also able to hold a developmental acquisition position, a mid-level acquisition position and a critical acquisition position as they climb the career ladder. This natural progression is in keeping with the building block approach designed into the DAWIA statute. It is also important because a tour in a critical acquisition position is required for PEO eligibility later in a general officer's career. The four-year critical acquisition assignment also boosts the officer's overall acquisition experience to the magical ten years required for PEO status.

It should be noted that this career track has not made accommodations for a joint duty assignment. The research indicates that there is ample ground to seek a blanket exemption from this requirement. It is recommended that in order to further justify the designation of acquisition professionals as technical specialists that this exemption only be sought for those officers with the highest acquisition credentials, those being the new Acquisition Managers or 9959s. Each of these officers will have at a minimum, six years of acquisition experience, based on the proposed career profile and be Level III certified in their career field. More importantly, they will also be fully qualified to hold a post of great responsibility within the acquisition process, that being a critical acquisition position. With these credentials, and the research presented on the implementation of DAWIA and DMR presented in the previous chapter, a waiver on the grounds of being a technical specialist should not be difficult to justify.

It may be argued that tying the joint duty waiver to the new 9959 designation is unfair or detrimental to those officers that do not eventually meet the qualifications

for 9959 designation. This is a moot point because one of the requirements that must be met in order to become a PEO or general officer in acquisition is a period of time spent in a critical acquisition position. The officers that fail to qualify as 9959s also fail to meet the requirements to be assigned to a critical acquisition position. That fact, not the lack of a joint duty waiver will be their disqualification for general officer status.

Figure 5.1 shows that it is physically possible to create a career option that, while recognizing the needs of the acquisition corps, allows those interested officers to remain viable in their primary MOS. The proposed career track is not a panacea. Not every officer will be able to follow it every step of the way. That is not the intended goal of a career track. It is merely a graphical way to portray to interested officers that the possibility exists for them to pursue a career in acquisition from Lieutenant to General without running into a dead-end stream along the way. Hopefully official adoption of such a career track would serve to entice enough interested individuals into the acquisition structure and ensure enough qualified officers survive to become an Acquisition Manager and possibly a PEO for Marine Corps systems.

B. PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION ANSWERED

This study has shown that although the Marine Corps' AWF has been successfully implemented and initially meets the requirements of the DAWIA statute there is a great deal of room for improvement. The Marine Corps can best direct the AWF and ensure that a sufficient number of Marine officers are accessed, trained and gain the experience necessary to staff the AWF by adopting one or all of the three broad recommendations expounded in the previous section of this chapter. The Marine Corps should redirect some of the focus away from the top of the acquisition hierarchy and place more emphasis on directing a larger number of motivated officers

into the bottom of the AWF structure. The Marine Corps should realign its MOS system to more closely approximate the existing Career Level structure created under DAWIA legislation. Finally, the Marine Corps should officially designate the Naval Postgraduate School as a key source to accomplish the education and training requirements for the AWF while continuing to access officers through the current system.

C. CONCLUSIONS

It has been shown that the Marine Corps has had some success in attracting military officers into the AWF. However, the number of officers required to man the AWF far exceeds the current number of volunteers. The Marine Corps should be able to alleviate this problem by using the SEP program as a conduit into the AWF while continuing to access officers through normal channels.

The Marine Corps should realign its acquisition MOS structure to more closely match Career Level certification and open the 9957 MOS to all individuals that take an active interest in acquisition. It should also assign this MOS to all Marine Officers that volunteer for SEP training.

The Marine Corps could also increase the number of majors that qualify for APC entry by giving prospective 9957s a two year developmental acquisition tour early in their careers.

Finally, it is possible to develop an acquisition career path that can ensure continued MOS credibility and develop acquisition officers sufficiently enough to be effective Program Managers and meet all DAWIA requirements to qualify them for the general officer positions within the AWF.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A brief discussion of two additional areas that were beyond the scope of this study could be considered for future study follows.

There are currently 22 contracting billets within the Marine Corps, 100 percent of these billets are designated as acquisition positions. The Marine Corps has deemed it important for the officers that occupy these billets to have a graduate education. In order to accomplish the required DAWIA and graduate training the Marine Corps, through the SEP program, sends seven officers per year to NPS . Since DAWIA implementation, the Marine Corps has identified 356 program management billets as acquisition positions. The Marine Corps has identified less than ten of these to be filled with acquisition professionals that possess graduate education. A study to identify the PM positions that would benefit from the assignment of acquisition professionals with the wide variety of graduate education backgrounds gained through participation in the SEP could show the Marine Corps where to place the SEP graduates that may be accessed into the AWF through the adoption of the proposed recommendations of this study.

A second area that may be of interest for a follow-on study would be to determine where SEP educated contracting officers (qualified at Level III) could be placed at the Marine Corps Systems Command. There are currently no positions available for SEP officers at the command that procures all of the Marine Corps ground weapon systems. This area for further research is suggested to take advantage of the training and expertise of the contracting officers that could be accessed into the AWF through the implementation of the recommendations in this study. If the Marine Corps implements these recommendations and continues to train at the present rate of seven contracting officers per year there would soon be more than the 22 contracting officers required to fill the current billets. While these officers will be able to serve subsequent tours in either contracting or program management positions by virtue of their SEP training, it may make sense to involve these second

tour contracting officers in the contracting process and glean from them some of the FMF experiences that the Marine Corps values in the acquisition process.

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